

BRITAIN'S BEST MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE

# HISTORY of WAR

**ORIGINS  
OF THE U-2**  
THE COLD WAR'S  
WORST KEPT  
SECRET

LAST STAND OF THE

# LUFTWAFFE



**CHURCHILL'S GREATEST  
COMMANDO RAID**

Uncover Hitler's final  
desperate plan to destroy  
Allied air supremacy

**SPITFIRE  
PILOT ACE**

**10-PAGE** RAF VETERAN INTERVIEW



**VIETNAM VALOUR**

A true story of Special Forces  
heroism and grit in the jungle



**AZTEC CONQUEST**

Follow the brutal Conquistador  
invasion of the golden empire



**MEDIEVAL MOVIE MYTHS**

How historically accurate are  
the big-screen battlefields?

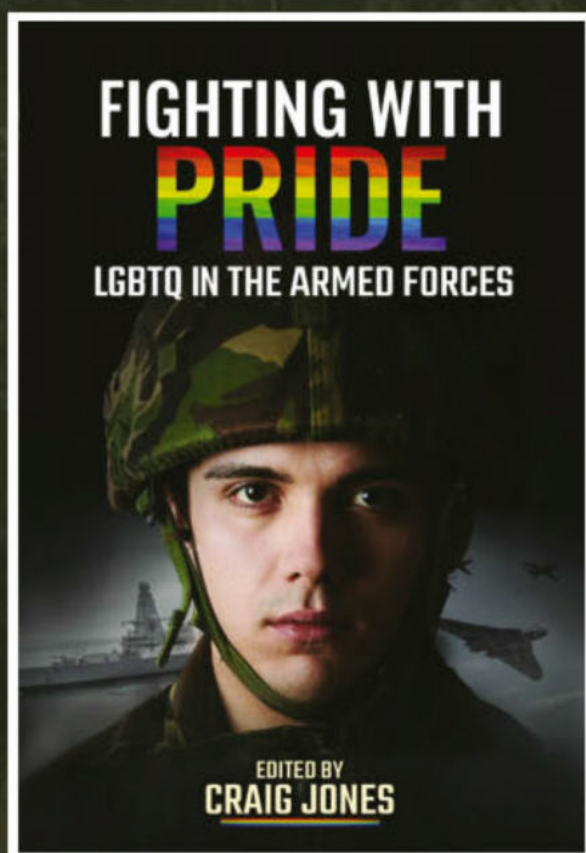
FUTURE

ISSUE 076

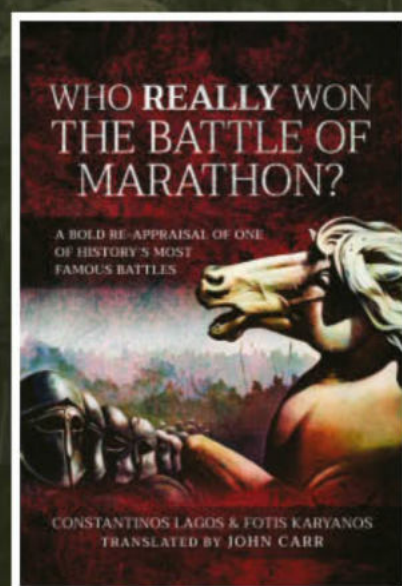


# X PEN & SWORD BOOKS

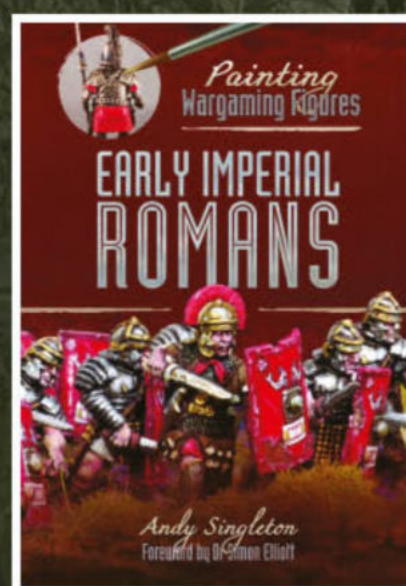
**25%**  
DISCOUNT



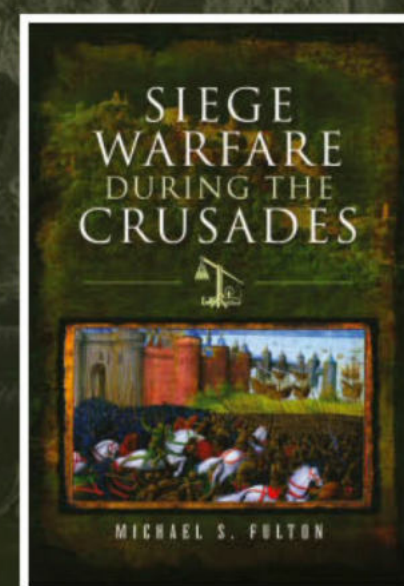
RRP: £25.00  
**NOW: £18.75**  
ISBN: 9781526765253



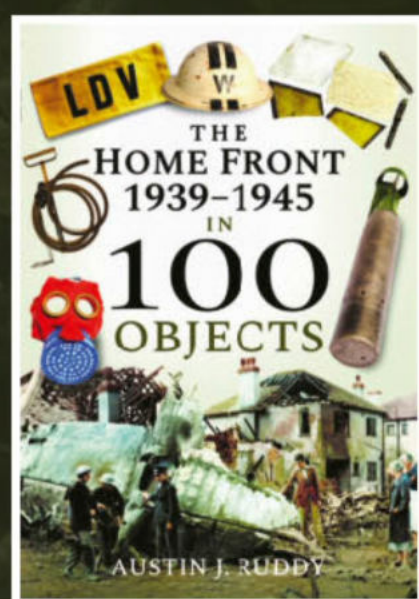
RRP: £25.00  
**NOW: £18.75**  
ISBN: 9781526758064



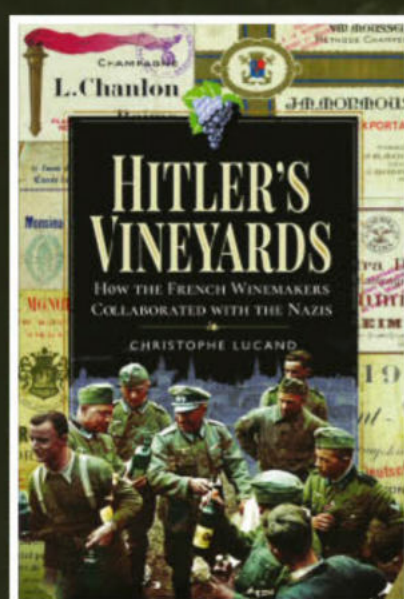
RRP: £14.99  
**NOW: £11.24**  
ISBN: 9781526716354



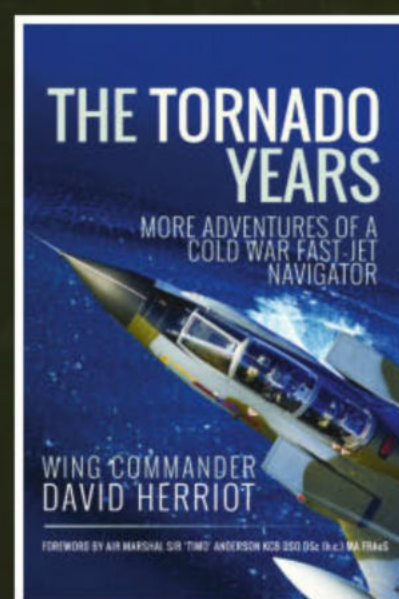
RRP: £30.00  
**NOW: £22.50**  
ISBN: 9781526718655



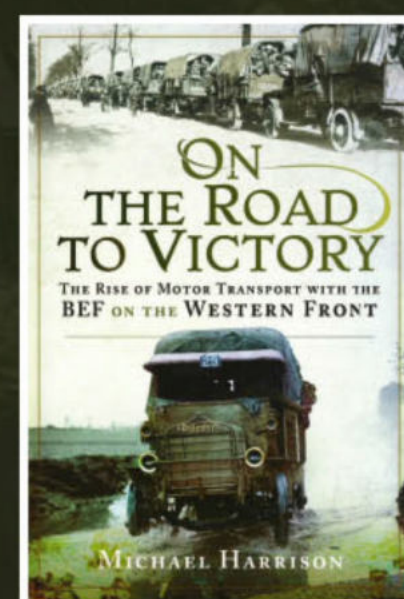
RRP: £25.00  
**NOW: £18.75**  
ISBN: 9781526740861



RRP: £25.00  
**NOW: £18.75**  
ISBN: 9781526750716



RRP: £25.00  
**NOW: £18.75**  
ISBN: 9781526758941



RRP: £19.99  
**NOW: £14.99**  
ISBN: 9781526750433

TO ORDER CALL AND QUOTE CODE **HOW76** TO RECEIVE YOUR 25% DISCOUNT:

**01226 734222**

OR ORDER ONLINE

[www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk)

X PEN & SWORD BOOKS LTD




Destroyed German planes in the yard of a German aluminium works at Grevenbrioch, 1 April 1945



Image: Getty

# Welcome

**T**his year will see a unique series of poignant anniversaries for anyone interested in the history of World War II. 2020 marks both 80 and 75 years since among the most important and world-changing events of the war. One such event in January 1945 was Operation Bodenplatte – the Luftwaffe’s final bid to defeat Allied air superiority, following the defeat on the ground in the Battle of the Bulge. This mass of air attacks saw veteran and novice pilots thrown into combat, flying both outdated machines and cutting-edge jets. It was a tragic last chapter for a force that had once reigned supreme in Europe’s skies.

  
**Tim Williamson**  
Editor-in-Chief



## CONTRIBUTORS

### TOM GARNER

This month Tom was honoured to speak with RAF veteran Allan Scott, who flew during the Battle of Britain and later during the Siege of Malta. Read his thrilling first-hand account of flying Spitfires and a host of other aircraft over on page 44.



### DAVID SMITH

David is a writer, historian and visiting lecturer at the University of Chester, with an expertise in American military history. On page 36 he recounts the pivotal Battle of Quebec (1759), during the struggle for what would become Canada.



### STUART HADAWAY

Stuart is an aviation historian, former curator of the Royal Air Force Museum and currently a senior researcher at the Air Historical Branch (RAF). For this issue’s cover feature he takes a look at Operation Bodenplatte (p. 26).





# LAST STAND OF THE LUFTWAFFE

**26** Uncover the desperate last bid to topple Allied air superiority in January 1945

## Frontline

### **14** Conquest of the Aztec Empire

European exploration of the New World turns into a bloody and destructive invasion

### **18** The horrors of war

The Spanish invasion brought atrocities to a land accustomed to extreme violence in war

### **20** Battle of Otumba

After retreating from the Aztec capital, Corés and his allies face overwhelming odds

### **22** Conquistadors, 'Tlatoanis' and a translator

Bitter rivalries, grudges and dark ambition fuelled personalities both sides of the invasion

### **24** In the ranks

A vast chasm in technology typified the battlefields of Cortés's invasion

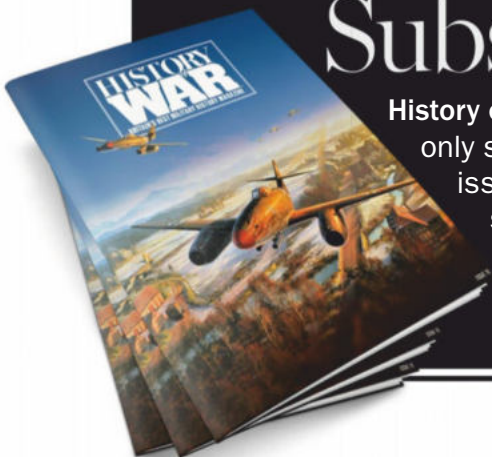
## TYPE 95 HA-GO

**72** Take a tour of Imperial Japan's light tank workhorse

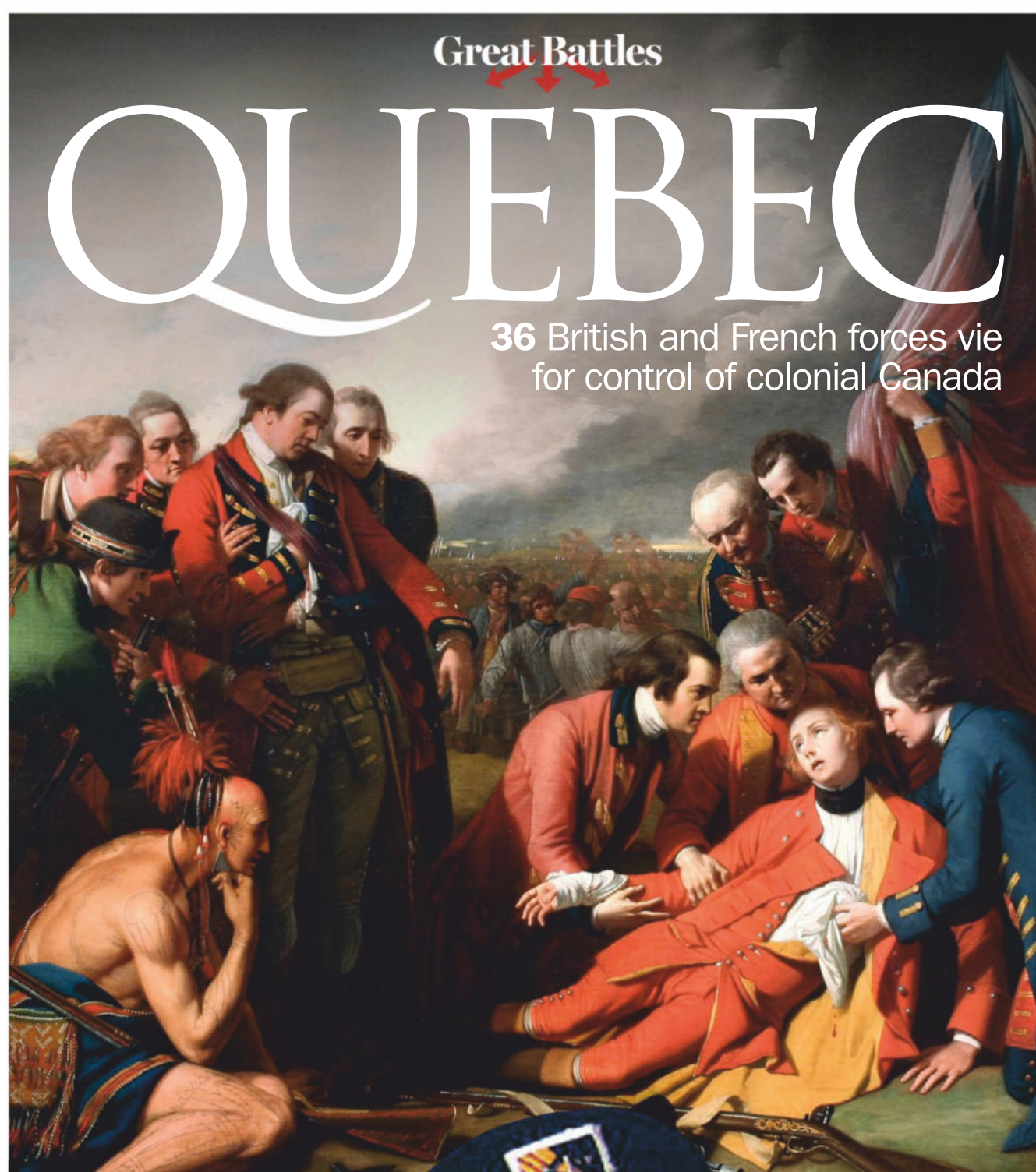


## Subscribe

History of War Subscribers not only save money on every issue, but also receive a special exclusive cover not available in stores. **Turn to page 54** to find fantastic deals!







## MEDAL OF HONOR HEROES ROY BENAVIDEZ

**62** In 1968 this Master Sergeant went beyond the call of duty to save his surrounded Special Forces comrades

- 06 WAR IN FOCUS**  
Stunning imagery from throughout history
- 26 Last stand of the Luftwaffe**  
Discover the machines and pilots of the climactic Operation Bodenplatte
- 36 GREAT BATTLES**  
**Quebec**  
French and British armies clash in Canada
- 44 Malta's Spitfire ace**  
Interview with RAF veteran Allan Scott
- 56 Crusader overlord**  
Follow the rise of the first King of Jerusalem
- 62 HEROES OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR**  
**Raul Perez Benavidez**  
This Special Forces medic risked his life saving comrades in the thick of a firefight
- 66 America's not so secret spy plane**  
Why the U2 aircraft failed to fool the Soviets
- 72 OPERATOR'S HANDBOOK**  
**Type 95 Ha-Go**  
Inside Japan's iconic light tank
- 78 Churchill's Boer commandos**  
Damien Lewis on the origins of Britain's fighting elite

## HISTORY of WAR HOMEFRONT

- 84 Museums & events**  
The latest exhibitions and events
- 86 OPINION**  
**When movie-making goes Medieval**  
Michael Jones discusses the pitfalls of depicting Middle Ages battlefields
- 88 Reviews**  
The latest history title releases
- 92 Top 5 books**  
The final days of the Luftwaffe
- 94 WWII this month**  
January's crucial events in photos
- 98 ARTEFACT OF WAR**  
**John Chard's revolver**  
A service pistol from Rorke's Drift









# **WAR<sup>in</sup> FOCUS**

## **STREET FIRE**

*Taken: c. 1985*

A militiaman is photographed in Beirut, during the Lebanese Civil War. What began in 1975 as a struggle between Christian and Muslim factions, soon attracted attention from neighbouring states. Syrian troops intervened in 1976, followed by Israeli forces in 1978. The UN Interim Force in Lebanon was installed the same year to help stabilise the region – as of 2019 it is still active.









## WAR<sup>in</sup> FOCUS

### “RATS, RATS, BIG AS BLOOMING CATS!”

Taken: **c. 1914**

French soldiers pose next to a tally of rats caught on the Western Front. Once both fronts had stagnated into static trench warfare, vermin infestations became a problem for troops on both sides of no-mans-land. Traps, terriers, or trusty bayonets were all used to hunt the long-tailed foe.



# WAR<sup>in</sup> FOCUS

## PISTOL PRACTISE

*Taken: 8 December 1939*

British recruits are instructed in using the Webley Mk VI service revolver, whilst training at Bovington Camp, Dorset, during the early years of the Second World War. These sidearms, used by the British armed forces from as early as 1887, entered official use during the First World War. A bayonet fitting was also sold during the war – useful for close-quarters trench combat.





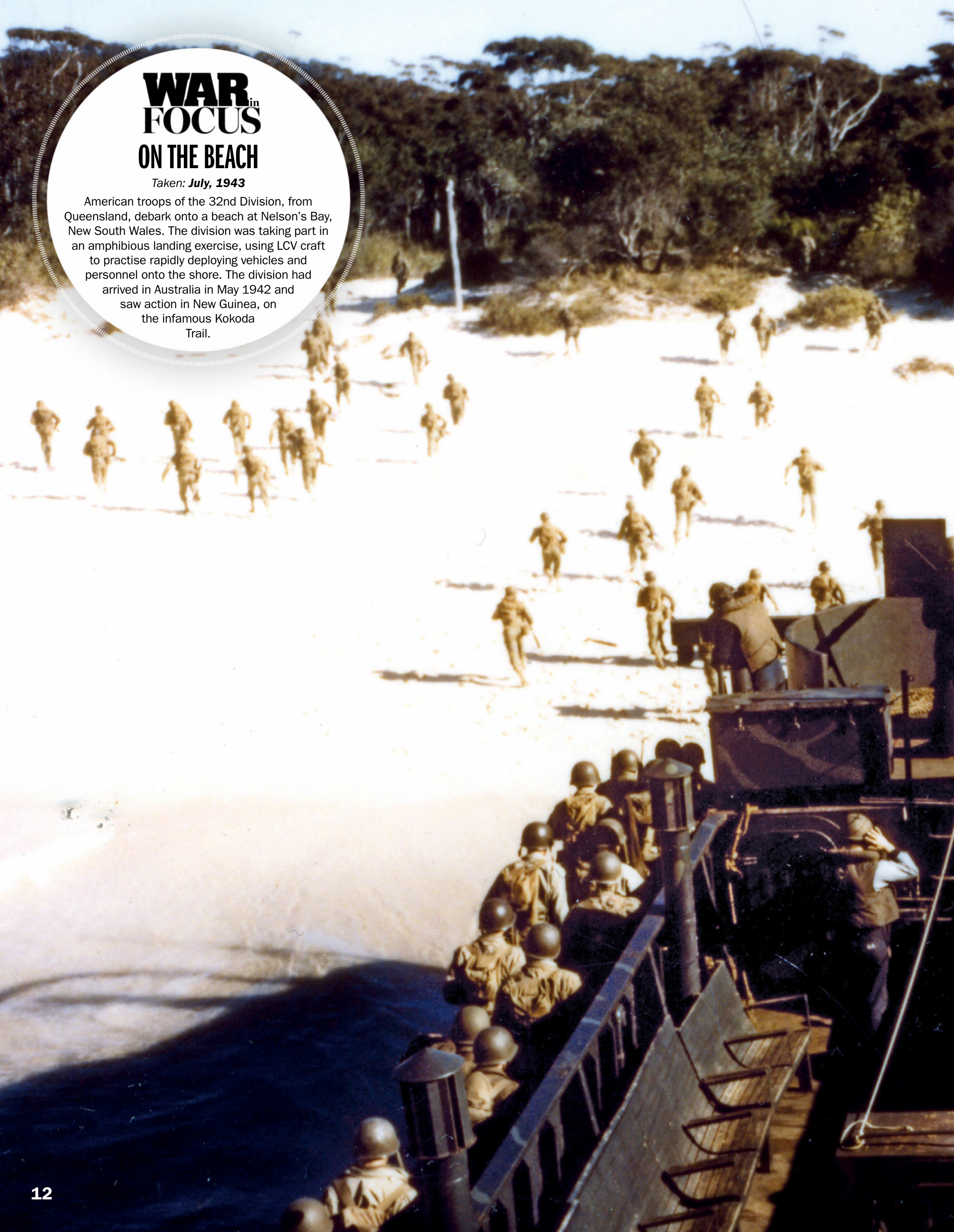




# WAR<sup>in</sup> FOCUS ON THE BEACH

Taken: **July, 1943**

American troops of the 32nd Division, from Queensland, debark onto a beach at Nelson's Bay, New South Wales. The division was taking part in an amphibious landing exercise, using LCV craft to practise rapidly deploying vehicles and personnel onto the shore. The division had arrived in Australia in May 1942 and saw action in New Guinea, on the infamous Kokoda Trail.









TIMELINE OF THE...

# CONQUEST OF THE AZTEC EMPIRE

Hernán Cortés leads a handful of Spanish conquistadors to an improbable victory against a powerful civilisation – changing the course of history in the Americas



Source: Wiki/Popular Graphic Arts

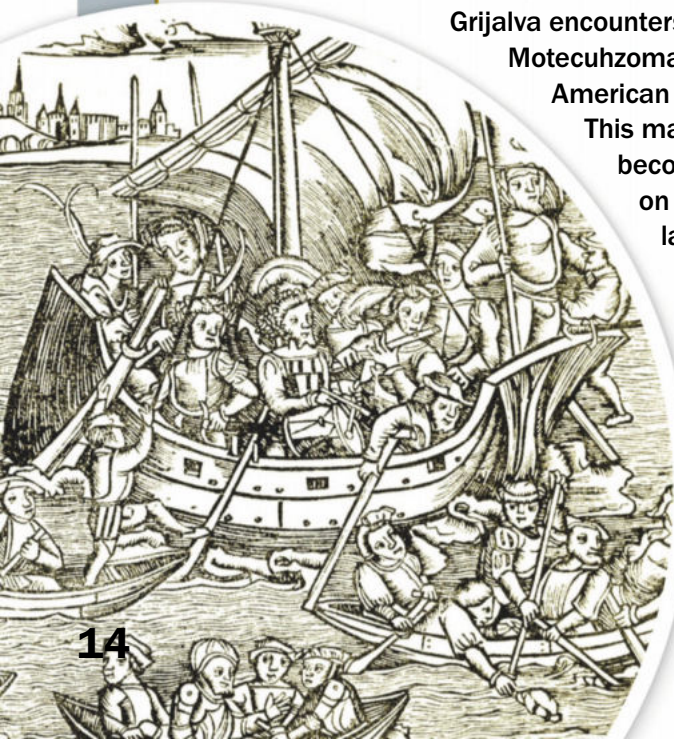
1517-18

## EARLY EXPLORATIONS OF MEXICO

Francisco Hernández de Córdoba and Juan de Grijalva lead expeditions to the Yucatán Peninsula and the southern coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

Grijalva encounters a delegation of Motecuhzoma II and a Native American joins his expedition. This man is baptised and becomes an interpreter on Hernán Cortés's later expedition.

Córdoba arriving in Cuba. The Caribbean island is the launch pad for the earliest Spanish forays into Mexico



February-April 1519

## CORTÉS'S EXPEDITION

Hernán Cortés commands the third Spanish expedition to the Mexican coast. Although he is ordered to simply explore and trade, Cortés establishes himself as a military leader. He unlawfully sails from Cuba with 11 ships and over 600 men. Before landing in Aztec territory he gains a handful of translators including shipwrecked Spaniards and a Nahua woman called 'La Malinche'.



An early depiction of Cortés arriving in Mexico. He is preceded in a procession by La Malinche

April-September 1519

## MARCH INTO THE INTERIOR 01

After founding Veracruz and scuttling his fleet, Cortés leads his expedition inland towards the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan. He forms alliances with native Cempoalan and Tlaxcalan forces before marching on Mesoamerica's second biggest city of Cholula.



The scuttling of Cortés's fleet. It is commonly believed that the ships are burned but they are most likely sunk





This meeting of Native American and European cultures is one of the most consequential, and tragic, in history

## MEETING OF CORTÉS AND MOTECUHZOMA

Falsely claiming to be an envoy of the king of Spain, Cortés meets Aztec ruler Motecuhzoma II in Tenochtitlan. The Spanish are lavishly entertained but during the next few months Motecuhzoma becomes a prisoner of Cortés. Tensions rise between the Spanish and the numerically superior Aztecs.

Cortés persuades Narváez's men to join him with the offer of untold riches



## ARRIVAL OF NARVÁEZ 03

Pánfilo de Narváez arrives on the Gulf Coast with 900 men after being despatched by the governor of Cuba to rein in Cortés. Cortés is forced to temporarily leave Tenochtitlan and attacks Narváez at Cempoala. Narváez is captured and his men join Cortés who returns to the Aztec capital with 1,300 soldiers, 96 horses and 2,000 Tlaxcalan warriors.

## ALVARADO MASSACRE

Cortés has left Tenochtitlan with Pedro de Alvarado in command as deputy governor. Alvarado permits Motecuhzoma to celebrate the Aztec festival of Toxcatl but the Spanish proceed to interrupt the celebrations. A horrific massacre of men, women and children ensues. A few survivors escape and their accounts inflame Aztec hostility towards the Spanish.

A brutal massacre is carried out in and around the Templo Mayor, the main temple in Tenochtitlan that is partially dedicated to Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec god of war



Image: Alamy

8 November 1519

October 1519

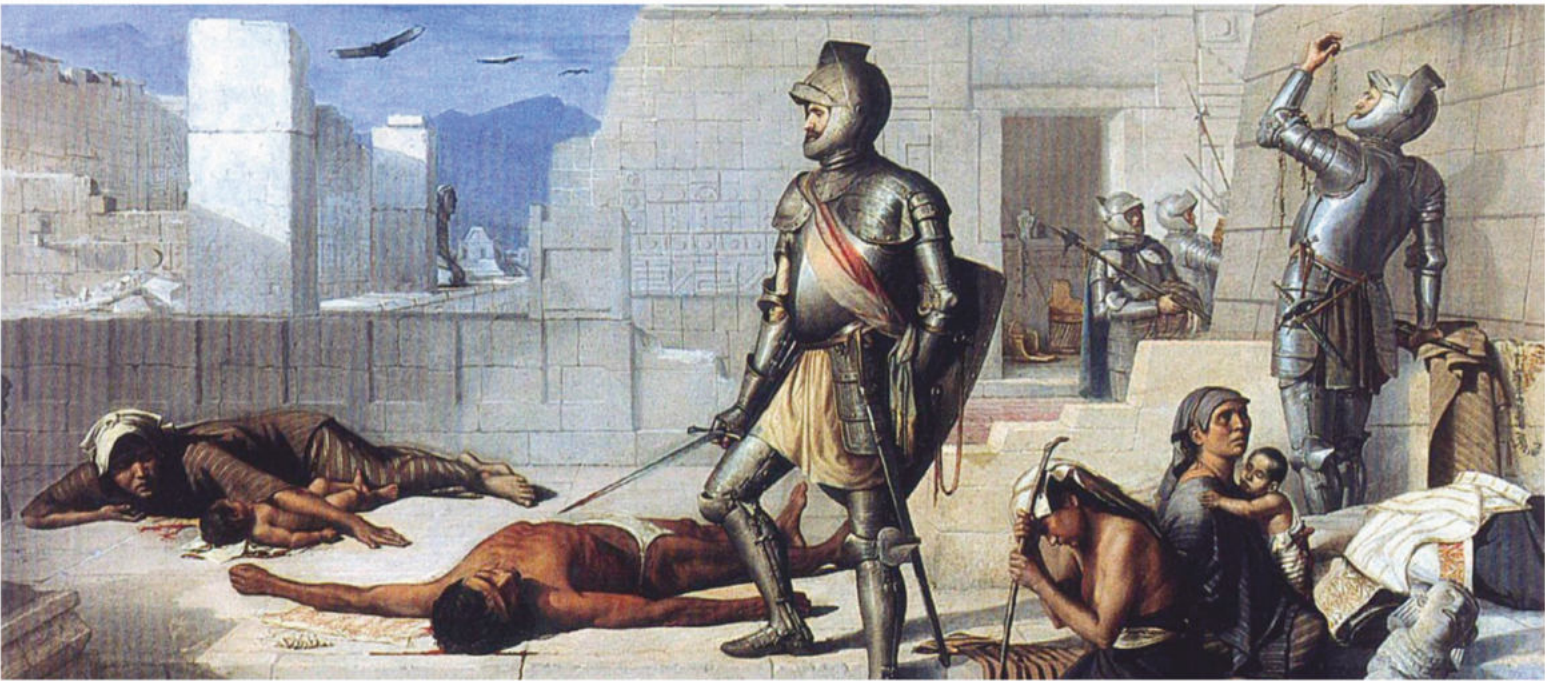
April-May 1520

22 May 1520

## CHOLULA MASSACRE 02

When Cortés's forces enter Cholula, rumours spread that the inhabitants plan to murder the Spaniards. In a pre-emptive strike, the Spanish seize and murder the local nobility as a warning to others. It is possible that thousands are killed by Cortés's men and the incident persuades Motecuhzoma to take the invaders seriously and invite them to his capital for talks.

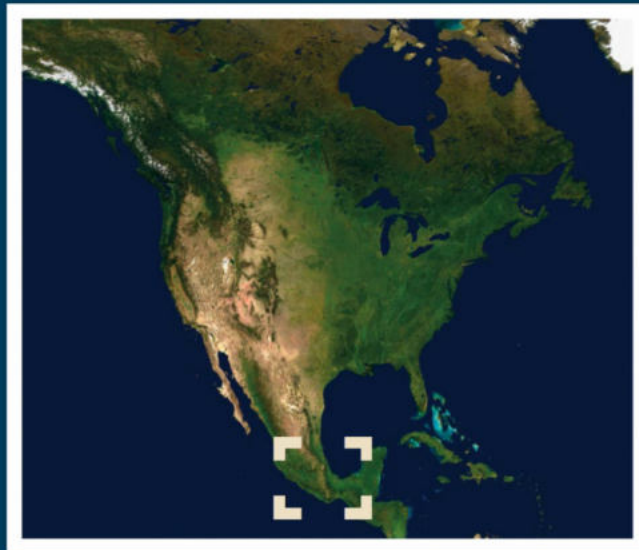
Cholula Massacre, by Felix Parra, 1877



Source: Wiki/Universite Paris Sorbonne



# MAJOR ENGAGEMENTS



Images: Alamy



“CUAUHTÉMOC, THE LAST EMPEROR, IS CAPTURED AND SOME ESTIMATE THAT THE AZTEC CASUALTIES BORDER ON GENOCIDE”

29 June 1520

## DEATH OF MOTECUHZOMA

Once Cortés returns to Tenochtitlan, the imprisoned emperor is killed with the Spanish later claiming that Motecuhzoma was stoned to death by his own people. It is more likely that he is killed by the Spaniards after he is no longer of any use to them.

Spanish soldiers carry the bodies of Motecuhzoma and a local lord to water before burial

Images: Alamy



## LA NOCHE TRISTE

Translated as ‘The Night of Sorrows’, La Noche Triste is the Spanish retreat from Tenochtitlan in the wake of the Alvarado Massacre and death of Motecuhzoma. Cortés is forced to withdraw across a causeway and hundreds of Spaniards and thousands of their native allies are killed in a significant Aztec victory.

Cortés is wounded during the retreat and the Spanish position in Mexico almost disintegrates

30 June-1 July 1520



Images: Alamy



## TWELVE APOSTLES OF MEXICO

Twelve Franciscan missionaries from Spain arrive in the newly founded viceroyalty with the aim of converting the indigenous population to Christianity. Requested by Cortés and known as the ‘Twelve Apostles of Mexico’, the monks embark on a ‘spiritual conquest’ that radically alters the religious landscape of the former Aztec Empire.

Right: A 16th century Spanish woodcut of Zapotecs converting to Christianity



Image: Getty



Newly constructed wooden vessels play a critical role in the conquest of the Aztecs

Image: Getty

## REGROUPING

The Spanish consolidate their position in Tlaxcala while a smallpox epidemic ravages the Aztec Empire that kills its new emperor Cuiclahuac. The Tlaxcalans also build 13 brigantines with cannons under Spanish supervision. This gives them control of Lake Texcoco and is a prelude to the upcoming Siege of Tenochtitlan.

July 1520-May 1521

7 July 1520

26 May-13 August 1521

May 1524

October 1522

## BATTLE OF OTUMBA 04

Approximately 500 Spanish survivors of La Noche Triste and a few hundred Tlaxcalans face 10,000-20,000 Aztec warriors on a plain northeast of Tenochtitlan. The Spanish-Tlaxcalan force wins a remarkable victory using shock cavalry tactics. The Aztec commander, Matlatzincatl, is killed and the Spanish are able to reach safety in Tlaxcala.

To signify the importance of the battle, later Spanish viceroys ceremoniously hand over power to their successors at Otumba



Image: Getty

## FALL OF TENOCHTITLAN 05

The Spanish gather a local Tlaxcalan-led confederacy to besiege Tenochtitlan. The Aztecs are numerically superior but Cortés's forces defeat them on land and water. Cuauhtémoc, the last emperor, is captured and some estimate that the Aztec casualties border on genocide. The siege directly leads to the downfall of the Aztec civilisation.



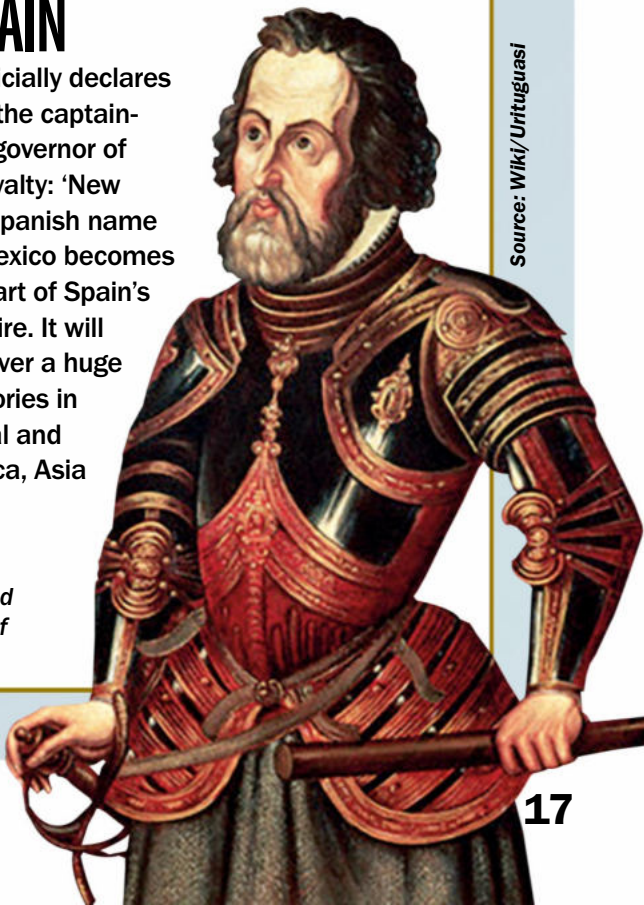
Image: Alamy

‘Cortés's Conquest of Mexico’ as depicted in a late-17th century painting by an unknown artist

## NEW SPAIN

Charles V officially declares Cortés to be the captain-general and governor of a new viceroyalty: ‘New Spain’. This Spanish name for central Mexico becomes an integral part of Spain's colonial empire. It will eventually cover a huge area of territories in North, Central and South America, Asia and Oceania.

Cortés depicted at the height of his powers



Source: Wiki/Uruguayasi



Frontline

# THE HORRORS OF WAR

While Aztec society was founded on a religion of violence, the conquistadors unleashed a broad spectrum of atrocities on the Mexico in the name of their own God



*After looting Tenochtitlan, desperate to find more gold, Cortés set fire to the feet of the Aztec and Tacuban leaders*

Image: Alamy



**“AFTER THEY FINALLY SURRENDERED THE TLAXCALANS, TOTONACS, TEXCOCANS AND CHALCA WENT AROUND, PULLING PEOPLE FROM HOLES, CLUBBING THEM TO DEATH AND CANNIBALISING THEIR CORPSES”**

**W**hen the conquistadors arrived in Tenochtitlan, they discovered a society founded on an institutionalised cult of death. At the Great Temple, prisoners of war, slaves and even children sent from the provinces were sacrificed to delay the death of the fifth and final sun – the sun of the Aztecs. They were strapped to a slab and had their hearts cut out alive, a shockingly violent, terrifying death. Although the conquistadors had come for the gold, they justified their actions as a conquest to liberate Mexico from the barbaric Aztec yoke, in the name of Christendom. However, they were no saints.

Before reaching Tenochtitlan, Cortés secured the Totonacs’ loyalty by destroying their idols and threatening to kill their chiefs and priests. In mid-October 1519, he entered the holy pilgrimage city of Cholula, home to Tepanapa, the world’s largest pyramid.

When Cholulan hospitality wore thin, Cortés rounded up all the leaders in a courtyard and had his men butcher them. The Spanish and Totonac auxiliaries went door-to-door, murdering all able-bodied men, before burning the priests alive in the Tepanapa, killing 3,000 in two hours alone. Then he set 6,000 Tlaxcalans upon the city, allowing them to unleash untold rapine for days, before reining them in – using the atrocity to send a clear message to any who dare defy him.

While the pulling of hearts is a visceral image, the nature of the conquistadors’ violence is often glossed over. Speaking of Alvarado’s massacre at the Great Temple, Friar Bernardino de Sahagún later wrote how the Spaniards pierced their victims with lances and struck them with swords, “Of some they slashed open their backs: then their entrails gushed out. Of some they cut their heads; their heads were absolutely pulverised.” He continued, “Of some they struck repeatedly the shanks; of some the thighs; of some the belly; then their entrails gushed forth. And when in vain one would run, he would only drag his

intestines like something raw as he tried to escape. Nowhere could he go.”

While Aztec methods of sacrifice were certainly cruel, Cortés introduced them to a uniquely tortuous European method, used to shock and awe. When Motecuhzoma’s representative in Nauhtla defiantly captured and sacrificed a Spaniard, Cortés had him, his sons and 15 Mexican officers burned alive. During the spectacle, he bound Motecuhzoma in chains and paraded him in full view of his people, once again belittling the sovereign.

While Spanish accounts claim that the Aztec leader died from a stray rock to the head, Mexica accounts paint a different story. The friar, Diego Durán, said his Mexica informants insisted that Motecuhzoma survived the blow to his head and that when the Mexica stormed his palace, intending to kill him, found him already riddled with stab wounds, adding, “Many chieftains and lords who had been imprisoned with him were all stabbed to death when they [the Spaniards] fled their quarters.” Cacamatzin, the lord of Texcoco, resisted so bravely, it took 47 stab wounds to kill him.

During the siege of Tenochtitlan, on one occasion the Aztecs sacrificed 53 Spaniards and four horses, mounting their heads on pikes. However, the suffering they endured was immense. Every quarter the invaders took, they reduced to rubble, which they used to fill the canals. The starving residents gnawed the bark off the trees and the roots from the earth. The stagnant water gave them dysentery, and the stench of rotting bodies filled every house. After they finally surrendered the Tlaxcalans, Totonacs, Texcocans and Chalca went around, pulling people from holes, clubbing them to death and cannibalising their corpses.

Having looted the city, Cortés was not content – he had debts to settle, and men clamouring for their pay. Even though the Spaniards had already raided the Aztec treasure trove, much of it had been dropped into the water during the rout on La Noche Triste – and the merchants had left with what little remained. As rumblings of discontent grew louder, the royal auditor demanded that Cortés torture the emperor Cuauhtémoc and the king of Tacuba, Tettlepanquetzal. He had their feet dipped in oil and set on fire – all for a mere 200,000 pesos worth of treasure, cast into the lake. Cortés would later hang the pair during an ill-fated campaign against a fellow conquistador, accusing them of plotting against him.

While between 100,000 and 240,000 Aztecs were killed in the siege of Tenochtitlan alone, many more died of smallpox – a disease introduced by the conquistadors, which they had no immunity to. In just two years, the indigenous population of the Valley of Mexico fell from 1.6 million to 900,000, and then to 200,000 by 1580. In the meantime, the Spanish plundered and tore down the Aztec cities, rebuilding their own directly atop. Hungry for silver,

conquistadors forced many locals to work the mines, often to death.

Although the New Laws of 1542 superficially afforded more rights to Christian converts, idolaters were often executed, and many more tortured in the name of God.

*During the Siege of Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs sacrificed scores of conquistadors in full view of their comrades*

Image: Alamy





Chronicle

# BATTLE OF OTUMBA

After committing an atrocity in the Aztec capital in 1520, the Spanish conquistadors were hunted down to the field of Otumba

After his disastrous retreat from Tenochtitlan, the odds were stacked firmly against Cortés's beleaguered army



In 1515, the Aztec tlatoani, the ‘speaker’ or emperor, Motecuhzoma II was warned that his empire was soon to be “ravaged and destroyed”. Soon after, a series of omens occurred: a foreboding comet, Huitzilopochtli’s temple spontaneously burned to the ground, another was struck by lightning and Lake Texcoco flooded its banks. When, in 1519, Motecuhzoma heard that a group of floating mountains had hit his shores, unloading enormous beasts with bearded white men atop, he assumed that the god Quetzalcoatl had returned to reclaim his realm from the Aztecs.

In truth, their leader was no god, but the Spanish conquistador, Hernán Cortés, who had spent vast sums of his own wealth on an unsanctioned mission to conquer Mexico. Joined by just 600 fellow Castilians, he allied with the Tlaxcalans, a local group hostile to the Aztecs, and by November had reached the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan – a booming city built on the swamps of Lake Texcoco, overflowing with 250,000 people, vast wealth and architectural wonders. With his sorcerers and gifts having failed to repel the mysterious invaders, Motecuhzoma decided it best to befriend them. Taking Cortés by the hand, he proclaimed, “In all the land that lies in my domain, you may command as you will.”

Although a loyal hostage of the conquistadors, Motecuhzoma was unable to navigate the growing hostilities between his masters and subjects.

When Cortés demanded priests at the Great Temple replace their statues with Christian iconography, Motecuhzoma negotiated a compromise, having symbols of both faiths stand side-by-side. Tensions finally boiled over when Cortés left Pedro de Alvarado in charge, while he went to repel a rival conquistador that had come to arrest him.

On 18 May 1520, as the Toxcatl renewal festival began, Alvarado surrounded the Great Temple with 1,000 Tlaxcalans and butchered the nobles and priests within. After Cortés returned, with new recruits in tow, the locals rose up in revolt, besieging the palace. When Motecuhzoma emerged on the roof, asking his men to clear a path for the Castilians to leave, they erupted in violence – declaring his brother, Cuitláhuac, their new leader. In the ensuing chaos, a stone hit Motecuhzoma on the head and he died soon after.

### La Noche Triste

With Motecuhzoma dead, the gloves were off. The Spanish slaughtered the remaining nobles in their custody and broke into the great treasure room – hauling off eight tons of gold, silver, precious stones and quetzal feathers for the Tlaxcalans. On the night of 30 June, a fortunate spell of rain drove much of the mob to their homes, allowing the Spanish to sneak out. Hiding behind a wall of Motecuhzoma’s children, they made it almost to the end of the Tlacopan causeway, before an elderly lady spotted them and raised the alarm.

The great temple drum sounded, joined by a symphony of bloodcurdling roars, as Aztecs flooded in from every direction. When Cortés crossed over the portable bridge his men had made, he was met by an enormous mob of warriors. Knocked from his horse and

surrounded, he was dragged away by his men, just as the bridge behind them collapsed. While Alvarado desperately vaulted across, those around him hurled their guns into the water, beset by swarms of canoes, firing projectiles. The men left behind, over-encumbered with gold, were swept into the water below, else butchered, or, even worse, captured. As the Aztecs stopped to gather loot, the survivors floundered across Lake Texcoco.

Having lost 1,000 Spaniards and thousands of Tlaxcalans, La Noche Triste (‘The Sad Night’), was a disaster for the conquistadors. Having destroyed his ships, Cortés always knew the only options were total victory or total defeat. As he marched around Lake Texcoco towards the safety of Tlaxcala, staving off repeated ambushes, it seemed his luck had run out. Not only was he vastly outnumbered, but most of his men were wounded. Moreover, he had left all his canons and guns in Tenochtitlan and had only a handful of horses left – some of which would have to serve as food.

### Armageddon

After passing the legendary ruins of Teotihuacan, they reached the plain of Otumba, the final stretch before the northernmost mountain pass leading to Tlaxcala. Here, clutching their wounds, they found themselves surrounded on all sides,

**“WITH MOTECUHZOMA DEAD, THE GLOVES WERE OFF. THE SPANISH SLAUGHTERED THE REMAINING NOBLES IN THEIR CUSTODY AND BROKE INTO THE GREAT TREASURE ROOM”**

*On La Noche Triste, hostilities exploded into urban warfare, as the Spaniards fled the Aztec capital*



tens of thousands of Aztec warriors stretched across the horizon. Ordinarily, the Spanish would have kept the enemy at a distance, using their guns and crossbows, but had so few left, hand-to-hand combat was inevitable. Utterly outnumbered and surrounded, Cortés lined up his Tlaxcala and Castilian infantry, forming a hollow rectangle, with two long sides facing outwards – and the weakest huddled in the centre. On his front lines were a female conquistador, Maria de Estrada, as well as his war hounds – thirsty for blood.

Forming a long line the Aztecs pinned the Spaniards down with missile fire, puncturing them with spears, darts, arrows and stones, allowing their shock troopers to approach. Wave after wave of berserkers hurled themselves at the enemy in unpredictable patterns, making sport of their horror, before retreating. Slowly they picked them off, slashing and smashing with clubs studded with razors, and corralling them together, tighter and tighter. As Bernal Díaz said they dared not break their lines, “Any soldier who left the ranks to follow some of the Indian captains and swordsmen was at once wounded.”

In Cortés’s own words, “We could hardly distinguish between ourselves and them, so fiercely and closely did they fight with us. Certainly, we believed that it was our last day, for the Indians were very strong and we could resist but feebly, as we were exhausted and nearly all of us wounded and weak from hunger.” With his men steadily crushed together, tears streaming from his eyes, Cortés screamed out commands. Suddenly, on a hill adjacent to the battlefield, he sighted the unmistakable gold and green feathered banner of Mexico – strapped to none other than the high priest, the cihuacoatl, riding a litter, surrounded by his warlords.

Cortés knew that leadership was crucial to Aztec morale – every move was conducted from central command, via smoke, mirrors and drum signals. Rallying together Alvarado and four mounted lieutenants, he lined up a suicidal cavalry charge. Having only seen the horses slip and stumble through narrow city streets, the Aztecs had not prepared any defence against them. As it was, the battlefield presented the perfect terrain for the Andalusian cavalry, now hurtling towards the enemy warlords. Dodging spears and stones, Cortés himself smashed the cihuacoatl from his litter. They circled around, skewering the fallen general and his fellow warlords, and, as predicted, despite their vast numbers, chaos immediately broke out in the Aztec ranks, sending them fleeing. Continuing on their way, finally, on 9 July, the Spaniards and their allies made it back to Tlaxcala, and not a moment too soon.

Antonio de Benavides wrote that were it not for the Tlaxcalans “no Spaniard would have escaped the Mexica, because there was nowhere else to go”. Their refuge gave Cortés the time he needed to rest and regroup, before conquering his way back towards Tenochtitlan in the summer of 1521. When the emperor refused to surrender, Cortés launched an almighty siege, taking the city street-by-street, with the aid of 150,000 auxiliaries. After 80 days of violence, smallpox and hunger, the Aztec empire collapsed, and a new order was built atop the rubble – New Spain.



# CONQUISTADORS, 'TLATOANIS' AND A TRANSLATOR

The conquest of the Aztec Empire was characterised by the actions of ruthless Spaniards, successive emperors and a mysterious linguist

## HERNÁN CORTÉS THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE WHO DESTROYED A CIVILISATION 1485-1547 SPAIN

Born at Medellín in Extremadura, Spain, Cortés came from a family of minor nobility. Although he possibly trained as a lawyer at Salamanca he decided to become a soldier. He sailed to Hispaniola in 1506 before moving to Cuba in 1509 to become a gold miner. He earned a fortune but also had a reputation as a gambler and womaniser.

Juan de Grijalva's expedition to Mexico encouraged Cortés's own ambitions and he was appointed captain-general of a new exploratory expedition by the Cuba's governor, Diego Velázquez. Cortés then exceeded his preparation brief and sailed before Velázquez could relieve him of command.

Once he landed in Mexico, Cortés scuttled his ships and claimed the land for Spain. He founded Veracruz before marching on the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan with only a few hundred Spanish soldiers and a handful of cavalymen and cannons. Alliances were formed with local tribes, including the Tlaxcalans, and Cortés used

this enlarged force (as well as massacres) to force the Aztec emperor, Motecuhzoma II, to receive him as an equal.

The two men met in Tenochtitlan and although Motecuhzoma lavished the Spaniards with gifts as a symbol of power, it was Cortés who took control. He took Motecuhzoma hostage in his own palace before he departed to deal with the arrival of Pánfilo de Narváez. After defeating Narváez, Cortés returned to Tenochtitlan but was soon forced to leave by the irate Aztecs. Against overwhelming odds, he won the Battle of Otumba and finally captured the Aztec capital after an epic siege in August 151.

Now the ruler of the fallen Aztec Empire, Cortés's conquests became the nucleus of New Spain and he became its first governor. Cortés also implemented the conversion of Mexico to Christianity but his reputation declined after a disastrous expedition to

Honduras. He spent his final years living between Mexico and Spain and died in Seville.

An often inscrutable character, Cortés was a relentlessly ambitious gambler who risked all and won. In the process, he overthrew an empire and left a dark legacy that changed the course of history.



Unlike many conquistadors who died violently in the New World, Cortés was almost unique in dying of natural causes back home in Spain

Image: Alamy

## MOTECUHZOMA II THE WARRIOR RULER WHO WAS DOOMED BY THE ARRIVAL OF THE SPANISH C.1466-1520 AZTEC EMPIRE

The ninth 'Tlatoani' ('King') of Tenochtitlan, Motecuhzoma was also the de facto ruler of the Aztec 'Triple Alliance'. This was an amalgamation of three Nahuatl city states that included Mexico-Tenochtitlan, Texcoco and Tlacopan in what is now central Mexico. As the overall leader, Motecuhzoma was effectively the head of an Aztec empire and had ruled from Tenochtitlan since c.1502-03. It was during his reign that the Aztecs' territory reached its greatest extent.

Motecuhzoma had expanded his rule south to Xoconosco and Tehuantepec and had conquered the Zapotec and Yopi peoples. He had been able to rebuild Tenochtitlan on the back of these victories but the arrival of the Spanish proved his undoing. Aware of their existence since 1517, Motecuhzoma showered the Spaniards with gifts to prove his superiority but this only increased their ambitions.

After a fateful meeting with Cortés, the Spanish claimed that Motecuhzoma willingly ceded his realm to Charles V of Spain.

This was highly unlikely but the Aztec was taken hostage by Cortés and subsequently killed in controversial circumstances. He became a symbol of resistance in later indigenous rebellions against the Spanish.

Despite their treatment of him, the Spanish subsequently acknowledged that Motecuhzoma was "astute, learned, discerning and capable"



Source: Wiki/Antonio Rodríguez (1636-1691)



Image: Alamy



Alvarado later became the governor of Honduras but died when he was crushed by a horse during the Mixtón War (1540-42)

## PEDRO DE ALVARADO

### THE CONQUISTADOR WHO ALMOST DESTROYED CORTÉS'S PLANS 1485-1541 SPAIN

Born in Badajoz, Alvarado arrived in the Caribbean in c.1510-11 and was part of Juan de Grijalva's expedition to the Yucatan. He then joined Cortés's expedition where he commanded a ship. By the time the Spaniards established themselves in Tenochtitlan, Alvarado had risen to effectively become second-in-command.

When Cortés left the city to deal with the arrival of Pánfilo de Narváez's force on the Mexican coast, Alvarado was left in charge as deputy governor. When the Aztecs gathered to celebrate the festival of Toxcatl on 22 May 1520, he feared an uprising and ordered his men to attack the Templo Mayor. Hundreds of Aztecs were massacred by the Spanish who in turn became besieged by angry warriors and civilians.

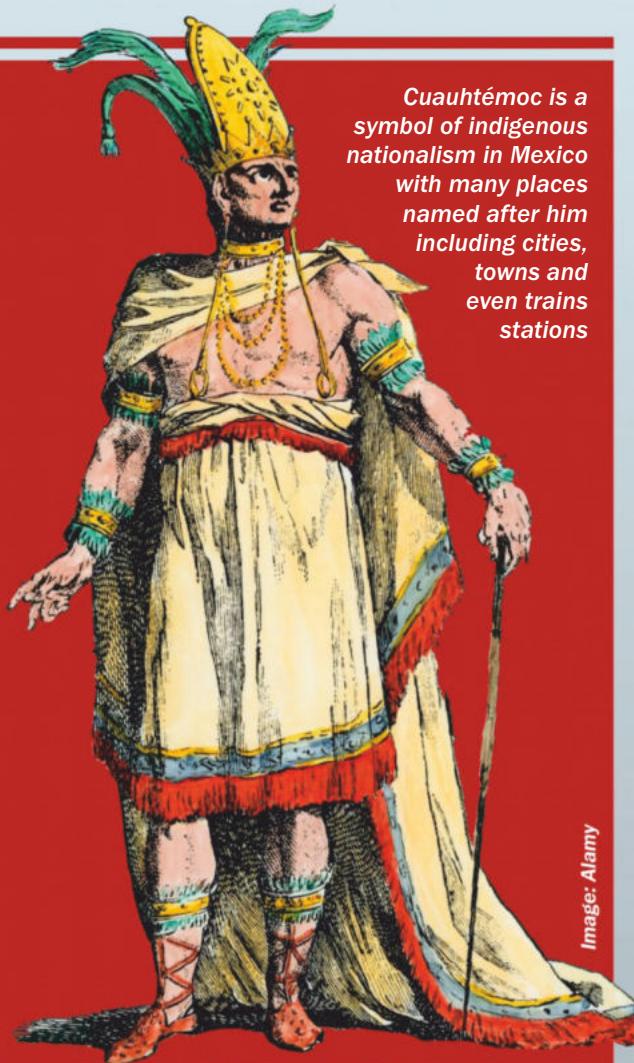
The killings led to the Spanish withdrawal from Tenochtitlan when Cortés returned. During Noche Triste, Alvarado led the rear guard and narrowly escaped with his life. He then participated in the Siege of Tenochtitlan before leading the conquests of Soconusco and Guatemala.

## CUAUHTÉMOC

### THE LAST AZTEC EMPEROR C.1497-C.1525 AZTEC EMPIRE

After the death of Motecuhzoma, the Aztecs elected his younger brother Cuitláhuac as emperor. Although Cuitláhuac began to lead resistance against the Spanish, he soon died of a smallpox epidemic that was ravaging the indigenous people. He was succeeded by his cousin Cuauhtémoc, a young, experienced war leader in 1520. It was left to Cuauhtémoc to defend Tenochtitlan during the great siege of May-August 1521. Many of the Aztecs' allies defected to Cortés and internal divisions were rife. Nevertheless, Cuauhtémoc refused to surrender until he was captured on 13 August 1521. He personally asked Cortés to kill him but he was kept as a prisoner. Cuauhtémoc kept his imperial title but was stripped of power and even tortured.

In 1525, Cortés took the emperor on an expedition to Honduras to prevent an insurrection in his absence. At Acalan, Cuauhtémoc was executed with other Aztec nobles for allegedly conspiring to kill Cortés and other Spaniards.



Cuauhtémoc is a symbol of indigenous nationalism in Mexico with many places named after him including cities, towns and even trains stations

## LA MALINCHE

### THE TRANSLATOR WHO WAS CRUCIAL TO CORTÉS'S SUCCESS NAHUA

Malinche was an indigenous slave who was given as a gift to Cortés in March 1519. She had already learned Spanish from a priest who had been captured by the Mayans and could also speak Nahuatl – the Aztec language. Cortés rescued the priest who could talk to Malinche in Mayan, who in turn could translate Nahuatl. As a translator, Malinche was key to Cortés's ambitions and he made her his mistress. They became inseparable with the shocked Aztecs later writing, "A woman of our race was leading the Spaniards to Mexico."

Soon learning Spanish and placing herself between two cultures, Malinche explained the complex Aztec culture to Cortés. She was instrumental in forming an alliance with the Tlaxcalans and informed the Spanish of plots to kill them. Her translations were so good that she could tell Cortés when the Spanish were being lied to or where gold could be found. Throughout the conquest of the Aztecs, Cortés assigned his best soldiers to protect her, including during the Spanish retreat from Tenochtitlan.

Although she bore Cortés a son, Malinche later married another Spaniard and the date of her death is unknown.

Malinche has a controversial reputation in Mexico with some regarding her as a founder of the country others as an enigmatic betrayer of her people



## PÁNFILO DE NARVÁEZ

### THE SPANISH ENEMY OF CORTÉS 1478-1528 SPAIN



Image: Alamy

Born in an unverified location in Castile, Narváez trained as a soldier before participating in the conquests of Jamaica and Cuba. Like many conquistadors, Narváez thought nothing of committing massacres against indigenous people and greatly profited from his activities.

In March 1520, he was ordered by the governor of Cuba to replace Cortés in Mexico and sailed with a large fleet consisting of approximately 1,000 soldiers.

After disembarking at Veracruz, Narváez was ambushed by Cortés who had rushed from Tenochtitlan. He was captured and most of his men defected to Cortés who used them to complete the conquest of the Aztecs.

Narváez was imprisoned for two years at Veracruz before he was sent back to Spain. Charles V subsequently appointed him to subdue and colonise Florida.

His expedition of 600 men met with disaster through storms and frequent clashes with indigenous people. Narváez himself was lost at sea and only four Spaniards survived.

The four men who survived Narváez's doomed expedition stayed alive by walking an epic trek through what is now the southwest United States before reaching Sinaloa in Mexico



Frontline

# IN THE RANKS

The bizarre and bloody Spanish conquest of Mexico was perhaps one of the most unusual wars of all time

**A**lthough Cortés boasted superior equipment to the Aztecs, without his luck and wits the novelty of his guns and horses would have very quickly worn off. Though he faced overwhelming numbers, the Aztecs were not used to European warfare, designed to kill, rather than capture, the enemy.

## THE TLAXCALANS

HAVING ARRIVED WITH VERY FEW MEN OF HIS OWN, CORTÉS DEPENDED HEAVILY ON THE MANPOWER OF THE TLAXCALAN AUXILIARIES

A confederation of polities, the small Tlaxcalan republic was among the only powers to resist the Aztec dominion, despite being surrounded. Ancient rivals, they and the Aztecs kept each other on their toes with a series of 'flower wars'. These battles were highly planned, and designed to allow each side to train their young warriors, while capturing enemies for sacrifice – perhaps the only reason the Aztecs allowed the Tlaxcalans to exist beyond their bounds. They boasted a highly organised army of 150,000 men, similar in nature to the Aztec army, providing vital manpower to Cortés' campaign.

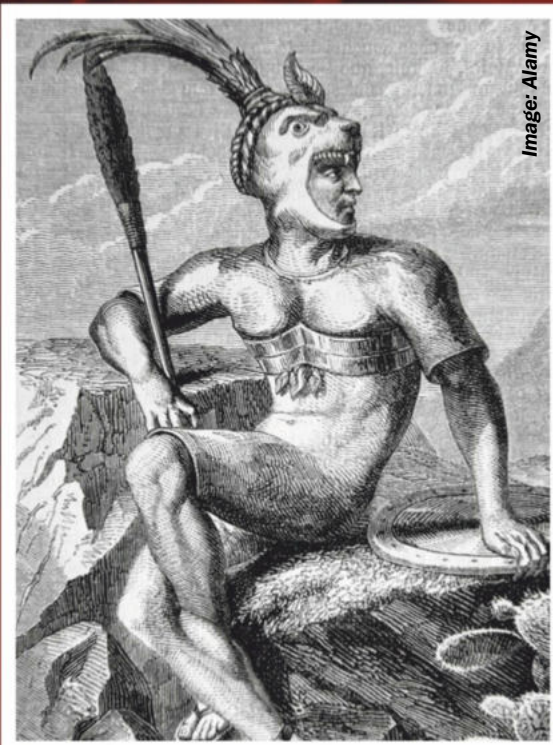


Image: Alamy

## THE CONQUISTADOR

THE CASTILIAN CONQUISTADORS RISKED THEIR SAVINGS AND LIVES FOR THE PROMISE OF A NEW WORLD

Cortés borrowed vast sums of money to finance his expedition. His conquistadors were a combination of military men and adventurers, seeking immediate glory and riches, who had likewise paid their way onto the conquest, at great risk. Infantrymen carried swords, crossbows and muskets, and the wealthier among them even brought their own mounts. The Aztecs had never seen horses before, let alone guns, and the pair gave the conquistadors a huge early psychological victory. While their captains and cavalry arrived in heavy steel armour, the less affluent adopted the Aztec cotton garb, which was not only cheap, but well suited to the Mexican climate, and offered decent protection against Aztec projectiles.

Image: Alamy

## AZTEC WARRIORS

TO THE AZTECS, WAR WAS NOT ONLY A WAY OF LIFE, BUT MAN'S DUTY TO THE GODS

Although the Aztec empire required vassals to send soldiers, military training began at childhood with two sets of schools for commoners and nobles. While they had not discovered metallurgy, warriors were expected to master projectiles, throwing spears, archery and swordplay.

The most iconic weapon was the macuahuitl, a saw-sword hybrid, fashioned from a wooden club interlaced with sharp blades of obsidian. It was designed not necessarily to kill, but immobilise and maim the enemy, allowing them to be captured more easily.

Warriors who netted the most captives for sacrifice rose through the ranks the fastest – rewarded with body parts which they could eat, to absorb their enemies' powers, or take home to their families. Soldiers wore cotton quilted armour and a tunic called the ehuatl with a skirt of leather or cloth and feathers to protect the upper legs. While everyone carried heraldic shields, with diameters of 30 inches, elite warriors might wear hard wooden helmets depicting jaguars, eagles, monkeys, parrots, coyotes or wolves. Soldiers who captured four enemies would receive a jaguar suit, eventually rising to the rank of cuahchique, the Aztec berserkers.





AA27901  
McDonnell Douglas™  
Phantom FG.1  
XT864/007R, No.892 NAS,  
HMS Ark Royal, November 1978  
**£149.99**  
RRP

- Newly tooled
- Highly detailed
- 244mm wingspan
- Limited Edition of only 2500 units worldwide

Produced under license. Boeing, McDonnell Douglas, F4- Phantom, the distinctive Boeing logos, product markings and trade dress are trademarks of The Boeing Company.



## THE PHANTOM MENACE

ALTHOUGH THE HISTORY OF BRITISH AVIATION can boast many famous aeroplanes amongst its ranks, there can be few that were as visually striking as the mighty Phantom FG.1s of the Royal Navy, which operated from the diminutive deck of HMS Ark Royal. In the seconds prior to launch and whilst connected to the ship's steam catapult, the aircraft's nose wheel oleo would be extended to its maximum 40 inch position, giving the Phantom a distinct nose up attitude to increase the efficiency of engine thrust. With steam rising eerily from the ships deck, Navy Phantoms looked like a giant metal praying mantis, ready to spring into action at a moment's notice. With maximum afterburner selected and the engine power almost melting the ship's deck, the Phantom was finally released from its shackles and roared into the air

– such a spectacular experience for anyone lucky enough to see it. Although most of us will have only ever seen the operation of Ark Royal's Phantoms on video or in reference books, these iconic images left such an indelible impression that Britain's Rolls Royce Spey powered Phantoms have since become something of an enigma and still command huge enthusiast interest to this day.

To order call **01843 233 512**

(Telephone order lines are open 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am-3pm on Friday)

Alternatively go to **www.corgi.co.uk**  
or visit your local Corgi stockist!

YouTube /officialcorgi

Twitter @corgi

Facebook /corgidiecast



# BODENPLATTE

LAST STAND OF THE

# LUFTWAFFE

On 1 January 1945, nearly a thousand German fighters swept from the wintry dawn to strike Allied airfields across northwest Europe. Intended to shatter Allied air power over the front, instead it destroyed the Luftwaffe as a fighting force







© Nicolas Trudgian



WORDS STUART HADAWAY

**A**t 9.00am on 1 January 1945, a formation of around 60 fighters of the German Luftwaffe arrived at low level over the town of Eindhoven in southern Holland. Roughly evenly split between Focke Wulf Fw 190s and Messerschmitt Bf 109s, their target was British airfield B-78, just west of the town. The airfield was crowded with aircraft from the 2nd Tactical Air Force (2TAF), the Royal Air Force's (RAF) units supporting the Allied advance into Holland and Germany.

No. 124 Wing with four squadrons of Hawker Typhoons, No. 39 (Recce) Wing with three squadrons of North American Mustangs and Supermarine Spitfires, and a host of support and communications aircraft were packed close together due to lack of space. Three squadrons had already taken off on operations, and several more were taxiing into position on the runway when the Germans arrived. "Even if they had fired with their eyes closed," recalled Flight Lieutenant Robby Bergmann of No. 181 Squadron RAF, "they would have hit something. Next to about 300 aircraft, most of them parked in line, the airfield was filled with vehicles of every type, fuel and ammo dumps, and stocks of all sorts of equipment."

Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Desmond Shepherd was just heading for his duties when he heard aircraft approaching, "After breakfast I was crossing the runway, going towards the armoury and keeping a sharp look out for our aircraft, as some were already out on ops and others were taking off. At that moment I heard gunfire ... This was closely followed by several FW 190s, and coming almost in the opposite direction were several Me 109s.

"I threw myself down onto the grass ... I saw what I think were the lead planes of each German section collide with each other. They burst into flames and locked together they came spinning down a few feet above my head, giving off tremendous heat.

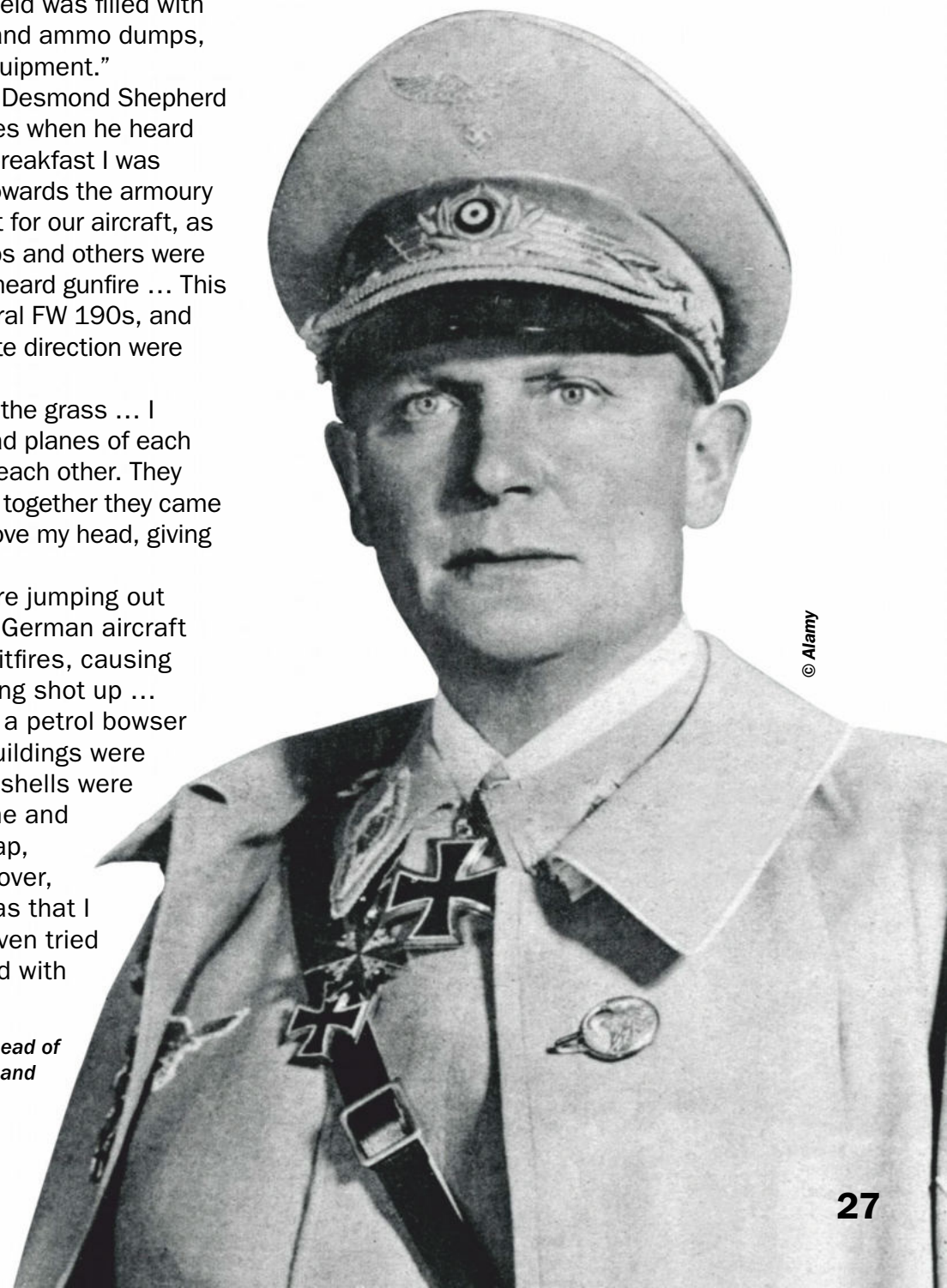
"Many [taxiing] pilots were jumping out of their aircraft and I saw a German aircraft crash in a row of parked Spitfires, causing more fires. Lorries were being shot up ... Many aircraft were burning, a petrol bowser exploded, huts and other buildings were shot up ... German cannon shells were hitting the ground around me and one grazed my right knee cap, so I was unable to run for cover, although the main cause was that I was paralysed with fear. I even tried to dig myself into the ground with

my hands, but the ground was frozen hard. An empty German cannon shell case with links attached, fell onto my head."

LAC Shepherd was not the only one scrambling for cover. As the leading Typhoons were destroyed, blocking the runway, the pilots found themselves trapped while sitting stranded in the middle of prime targets.

Pilot Officer Bill Harle, No. 438 Squadron, recalled, "At approximately 9.00am the flight was taxiing out for take-off ... As we approached the end of the runway and were ready to go, I saw that the squadron leader, Pete Wilson, and his No. 2 Ross Keller were already taking off. It was then that I saw there was a number of Fw 190s and Me 109s flying directly down the runway facing me. I was aware that their cannons were firing and the shells were bouncing down the runway.

"The next minutes, I had no idea how long the beat up lasted, began by making myself as small as possible behind the big Typhoon engine and after a few seconds I undid my harness, eased myself out of the cockpit, off the wing, where I rolled to the



© Alamy

*Reichsmarshal Herman Goering, head of the Luftwaffe, took Galland's plan and divorced it from all reality*



side of the runway then tumbled into a nearby bomb hole."

Above Shepherd and Harle, Feldwebel Oskar Bosch was flying a Focke Wulf Fw 190 from 4/JG3, "Led by Lieutenant Muller we arrived over the city of Eindhoven on the deck and we pulled up to attack the airfield. Soon hell broke loose. A fuel station with a Typhoon beside in full operation came under fire and blew in front of my Fw 190. In the shortest time the field was engulfed in flames and smoke and after some four to five attacks visibility was almost reduced to zero. By a few metres I missed a Focke-Wulf that passed in front of me. After the first or second attack everyone flew across the field individually, it was a miracle to escape alive!"

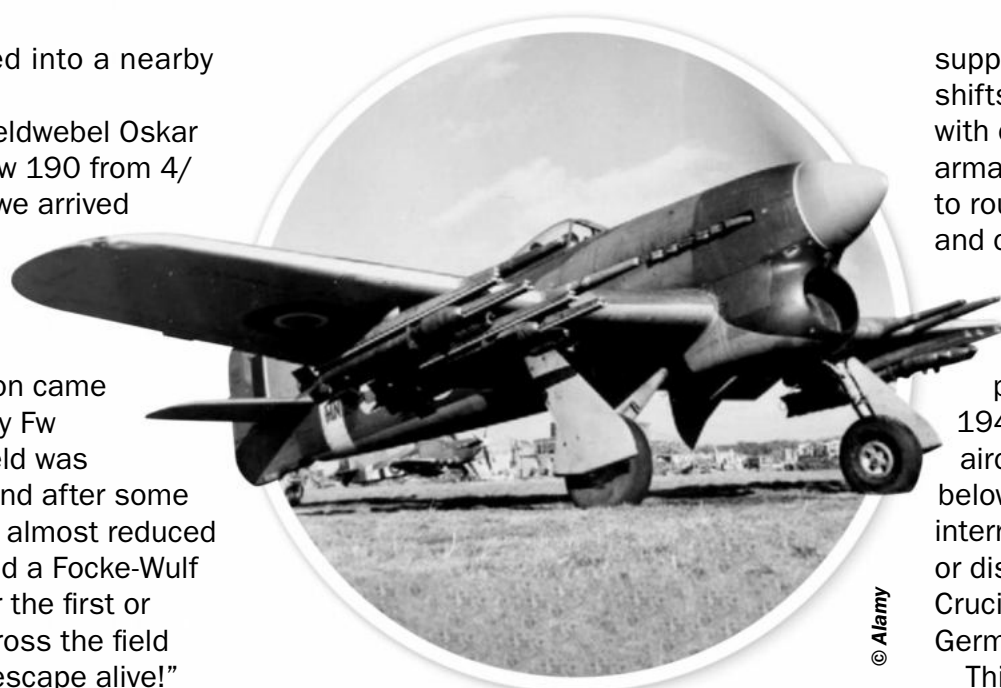
After 25 chaotic minutes, the Germans withdrew, leaving behind an airfield in ruins. Over 100 RAF aircraft had been destroyed or damaged, bomb and fuel supplies smashed, and over 50 men killed or wounded. The attack had been far from one-sided. The attackers from JG3 had lost over a third of their number, some to flak and fighters over the airfield itself, and a few on their way to the objective. Most were lost in a running dogfight as they withdrew, as the RAF squadrons already airborne returned and fell on the Germans from above.

However, even the worst hit RAF squadrons – Nos. 182 and 440 Squadrons – were partially operational again on 4 January, and were fully operational days after that. Aircrew casualties had been few and were easily replaced, while the aircraft losses were even more easily made good from reserves. On the other hand, prior to the attack JG3 was already at only 60 per cent strength for pilots and below 50 per cent strength for aircraft. While the Allied air forces could soak up the casualties and losses, the Luftwaffe could not.

### The Great Blow

The attack on Eindhoven was just one element of a much wider plan, codenamed Operation

*US P-47 Thunderbolts destroyed on the ground at Y-34 at Metz*



*RAF Typhoons at B-78 Eindhoven a few months before Bodenplatte. Such aircraft were crucial to the Allied advance across Europe*

'Bodenplatte' ('Base Plate'). The plan was adapted from one originally conceived in the autumn of 1944 by General der Jagdflieger Adolf Galland, commander of the Luftwaffe's fighter forces, as Operation 'Great Blow'.

Galland wanted to take advantage of the rejuvenation of the German aircraft industry in 1943 and 1944 to gather a massive reserve of fighters, potentially numbering over 3,000 aircraft. He would throw this force at an American bomber raid, in the hope of inflicting crippling casualties. A series of such efforts could lead to at least a temporary cessation of raids, with resulting benefits to German strength and production.

In theory, this was entirely possible. German fighter production had grown by an extraordinary extent since Albert Speer was appointed Minister for Armaments and War Production in early 1942. Sometimes portrayed as a miracle, the truth was far more mundane. Until then, German industry had effectively been on a peacetime footing, geared only to

supply a short war. Factories still worked single shifts and the military constantly tinkered with designs to produce technically excellent armaments in small numbers. By switching to round-the-clock production, rationalising and centralising control over contracts and raw materials, and also drastically reducing the number of aircraft types in production, Speer increased aircraft production by nearly 300 per cent between 1942 and 1944. Even so, by December 1944 aircraft production was still 31 per cent below Speer's projections, as Allied bombing interrupted factory production and delayed or displaced the workers in those factories. Crucially it also systematically destroyed Germany's infrastructure.

This became an increasing problem as bombing forced factories to become ever more dispersed, or to move to underground sites hacked out of mountains. Needless to say, the materials and manpower needed to repair bomb damage or build new factories was also a significant drain on German production. Likewise, oil production was severely inhibited. These factors, and of course combat losses, led to Galland's potential strike force falling to a projected 2,000 aircraft by the end of 1944.

### Pilot shortage

But aircraft were just one problem faced by the Luftwaffe. A chronic shortage of pilots hampered their efforts at every turn. Luftwaffe pilots had been of the highest standard early in the war. With time for full training programmes, and a leavening of both personal experience and doctrinal development from the Spanish Civil War (1936-9), the Luftwaffe was a formidable opponent in 1939.

The air forces of Europe were overwhelmed in rapid succession, until the irresistible force of the Luftwaffe had run into the immovable object of the RAF during the Battle of Britain. Even after this defeat, superior German doctrine, training and aircraft allowed them to

**"OVER 100 RAF AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN DESTROYED OR DAMAGED, BOMB AND FUEL SUPPLIES SMASHED, AND OVER 50 MEN KILLED OR WOUNDED"**





# WHAT IS AVAXHOME?



# AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal,  
providing you various content:  
brand new books, trending movies,  
fresh magazines, hot games,  
recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price

Cheap constant access to piping hot media

Protect your downloadings from Big brother

Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages

Brand new content

One site



# AVXLIVE • ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open <https://avxlive.icu>



## RAF – 2ND TACTICAL AIR FORCE

	<b>HAWKER</b> TYPHOON IB	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 288 LOST OR DAMAGED 65
	<b>HAWKER</b> TEMPEST V	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 90 LOST OR DAMAGED 0
	<b>SUPERMARINE</b> SPITFIRE IX	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 324 LOST OR DAMAGED 49
	<b>SUPERMARINE</b> SPITFIRE XI	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 18 LOST OR DAMAGED 15
	<b>SUPERMARINE</b> SPITFIRE XIV	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 108 LOST OR DAMAGED 16
	OTHER 2 TAF AIRCRAFT	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 47

## RAF – OTHER AIRCRAFT

	<b>AVRO</b> ANSON	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 6
	<b>SHORT</b> STIRLING	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 1
	<b>DOUGLAS</b> DAKOTA	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 8
	<b>AVRO</b> LANCASTER	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 1
	<b>HANDLEY PAGE</b> HARROW	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 7

## LUFTWAFFE AIRCRAFT

	<b>FOCKE WULF</b> Fw 190-A	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 222 LOST OR DAMAGED 80
	<b>FOCKE WULF</b> Fw 190-D	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 163 LOST OR DAMAGED 76
	<b>FOCKE WULF</b> Fw 190-F	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 50 LOST OR DAMAGED 6
	<b>MESSERSCHMITT</b> Bf 109 G	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 332 LOST OR DAMAGED 85
	<b>MESSERSCHMITT</b> Bf 109 K	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 90 LOST OR DAMAGED 40
	<b>MESSERSCHMITT</b> Me 262 A	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 22 LOST OR DAMAGED 0
	<b>ARADO</b> AR 234 B	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 6 LOST OR DAMAGED 0
	<b>JUNKERS</b> Ju 88	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 44 LOST OR DAMAGED 15

	<b>SUPERMARINE</b> SPITFIRE XVI	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 90 LOST OR DAMAGED 17
	<b>NORTH AMERICAN</b> B25 MITCHELL	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 54 LOST OR DAMAGED 12
	<b>NORTH AMERICAN</b> MUSTANG II	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 36 LOST OR DAMAGED 7
	<b>VICKERS</b> WELLINGTON XIII	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 18 LOST OR DAMAGED 13
	<b>DE HAVILLAND</b> MOSQUITO XVI	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 18 LOST OR DAMAGED 7

## USAAF – 9TH AIR FORCE

	<b>LOCKHEED P38</b> LIGHTNING	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 25 LOST OR DAMAGED 0
	<b>REPUBLIC P47</b> THUNDERBOLT	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 600 LOST OR DAMAGED 137
	<b>NORTH AMERICAN</b> P51 MUSTANG	NO. OF AIRCRAFT 150 LOST OR DAMAGED 2

## USAAF – OTHER AIRCRAFT

	<b>BOEING B17</b> FLYING FORTRESS	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 16
	<b>CONSOLIDATED B24</b> LIBERATOR	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 14
	<b>DOUGLAS C47</b> DAKOTA	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 11
	<b>REPUBLIC P47</b> THUNDERBOLT	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 2
	<b>NORTH AMERICAN</b> P51 MUSTANG	NO. OF AIRCRAFT - LOST OR DAMAGED 8

# THE LAST STAND

Exact numbers and losses during Bodenplatte are hard to determine

It is difficult to place exact numbers on the aircraft that took part in Operation Bodenplatte on both sides. Partly, this is due to records being lost and destroyed, and partly due to the size and complexity of the operation. In simple organisational terms, too many different command structures were involved.

For example, although the main operational area was under the control of the RAF's 2TAF, the US 9th Air Force occupied the southern area, and outside elements such as RAF Transport Command and the US 8th Air Force also operated from the same airfields. Numbers of Allied heavy bomber aircraft, based in the UK, had also landed at the same airfields, sometimes days or even weeks before, short on fuel or with battle damage, and records on these aircraft are patchy.

In other cases, aircraft were damaged, but it was only weeks later that they were deemed to be irreparable and scrapped. This means that they may not have been immediately included in the figures and were only reported as lost later. Other damaged aircraft, like a single Hawker Hurricane, were 'hack' aircraft, runabouts that were not on the official squadron strengths.



© Alamy



The V-weapons diverted large amounts of Allied resources, but also considerable amounts of German ones, from the front lines



achieve further victories in the Balkans, Middle East and, most spectacularly, against the Soviet Union.

However, casualties from these battles and the unforeseen wars of attrition against both Britain and the Soviets overwhelmed the Luftwaffe's relatively small training system. Training programmes were truncated to speed up the flow of replacements. By July 1944 the average new Luftwaffe pilot was arriving on the front line with around 120 flying hours, just 15-20 of them on his operational type. By contrast, American pilots were receiving 400 hours training, nearly half of it on their operational type, and RAF pilots around 350 hours, 100 of them on operational types.

The training accident rate soared until sometimes a third of each intake was lost before even qualifying, wasting not only personnel but also aircraft. Oil shortages also cut training hours, until the flow of pilots was reduced to just 30 per cent of the system's theoretical monthly capacity. Personnel were not taught basic skills

in instrument flying or tactics. From mid-1942, the strengths of front line units gradually declined, reaching around 60 per cent of authorised pilots and 70 per cent of authorised aeroplanes by September 1944.

It is telling that of the 107 German pilots credited with shooting down 100 or more enemy aircraft, only eight of them entered front line service after June 1942. The quality of German aircrew was decreasing and the quality of their foes improving.

Galland's plan never happened and by November 1944 the gathered force was instead earmarked for the coming German offensive in the Ardennes. A mass strike was planned against Allied airfields in the area, crippling 2TAF and the US 9th Air Force. This would both remove Allied air superiority and also allow the Luftwaffe the freedom to support their ground forces in the devastating style used in earlier campaigns.

However, when the Ardennes offensive was launched on 16 December 1944, appalling weather kept the Luftwaffe grounded. Instead, they became dragged into a piecemeal war of attrition, flying when the weather allowed, and losing 891 aircraft and 478 aircrew in just ten days of operations.

By 31 December 1944, the German fighter force on the Western Front stood at 1,446 aircraft, just 990 of which were serviceable and ready to fly. Although 1,825

pilots were on strength, only 1,139 of these were deemed combat ready.

### Last minute preparations

The relative inexperience of the average German pilot was exacerbated by the way the operation was staged. Senior officers were warned weeks before that an attack was being planned, and managed, despite desperate fuel shortages, to stage some ground-attack training. But in the weeks since the start of the Ardennes offensive it had slipped from most minds. When the orders were broadcast on 31 December, most commanders were caught unprepared. Many briefed their pilots on the bare essentials of the operation late that evening, but often only in the sketchiest terms. While a few units, such as JG1 and JG6, were briefed using detailed models of their targets, and many others used aerial photographs, some pilots found themselves only being assigned their target as their engines warmed up on the morning of 1 January.

USAAF P-47 Thunderbolts of the 365th Fighter Group take off from Y-34 Metz



© Alamy

© Alamy

**“THE TRAINING ACCIDENT RATE SOARED UNTIL SOMETIMES A THIRD OF EACH INTAKE WAS LOST BEFORE EVEN QUALIFYING”**

*The briefings given to the German pilots before the operation were often extremely basic*



*German fighter production continued to grow to the end of 1944, but Allied bombing prevented it reaching its full potential*



© Alamy

This lack of detailed instruction blunted the effectiveness of some attacks.

The lack of experience also helped shaped the overall German plan. Take-off was not until around 8.00am, with times staggered to allow formations from over 30 airfields to join up into nine main 'streams' of aircraft. Dawn was actually half an hour earlier, but taking off in the dark was too dangerous for the poorly trained pilots. This would place them over their targets at 9.20am, long after dawn (the most vulnerable part of the military day) had passed and the first Allied formations had taken off.

Each formation would be led by Junkers Ju 88s borrowed from the night fighter forces, which would mark the routes with flares before

turning back at the front lines. They were needed because of the poor navigational skills of the day fighter pilots. Once across the front lines, the different formations would proceed to a total of 16 Allied (mostly British) airfields in southern Holland, Belgium and northern France. Once there, they would strafe and bomb those airfields into oblivion.

### **Bodenplatte**

Lieutenant Willi Heilmann (III/JG54) remembered the dawn of 1 January 1945, "We were given a magnificent breakfast. Was it a New Year's feast or the last meal of a condemned man? Cutlets, roast beef and a glass of wine. For sweets there were pastries and several cups of fragrant

coffee ... The last minutes before we were airborne seemed an eternity. Nervous fingers stubbed out half-smoked cigarettes ... And then the armada took off. A distant roar in the air soon increased in strength. Soon the pathfinder aircraft were circling above the field which was now brightly lit up. Machine after machine took off, circled and regrouped. Squadron after squadron set out."

Over 900 aircraft formed up, and followed their pathfinders towards the front lines. Some of the formations went awry. JG6's pathfinders, for example, got lost, and led their charges well off the course





# THE OLD AND THE NEW

German fighter production was a curious mix of the out-dated with the ultra-modern, or even futuristic

Although Bodenplatte was led by a handful of highly advanced jet aircraft – Messerschmitt Me 262A fighters and Arado Ar 234B bombers, the vast majority of the German aircraft were two or more year-old designs. On paper, German aircraft development in 1945 was superbly advanced, with concepts and designs that were far beyond Allied technology, and laid the ground work for aircraft for decades to come. However, this veneer hid a hollow reality. Few of these highly advanced designs made it past the concept stage or basic drawing board. They were pipe dreams that distracted from reality.

The Nazi hierarchy's obsession with 'wonder weapons' stymied practical development, as did Hitler's insistence on bombers taking priority – even the Me 262 was produced mostly as a very light bomber rather than a fighter. The V-1 flying bombs and V-2 rockets were a definite drain on Allied resources, diverting aircraft

and equipment into the defences against them, but it is debatable whether this was worth the estimated 24,000 conventional aircraft that the Germans could have built instead. The Me 163 rocket fighter (which lacked under-carriage) was short-ranged and had an appalling attrition rate among its pilots. The He 162 Volksjäger ('People's fighter') that was put into production in 1945 was based on the ludicrous concept that Hitler Youth pilots could be trained on gliders and then sent straight into combat in jets. The He 162 was also partially built from wood due to materials shortages, and similar shortages led to the Me 262's engines being made from inferior metals that wore out quickly.

Instead of pushing the incremental development of proven types in large numbers, the Nazis' obsession with tiny numbers of futuristic concepts greatly inhibited their actual combat strength.

to their target at Volkel. Other formations ran into anti-aircraft (AA) fire over the front – German as well as Allied. Due to operational security, few German AA units knew of the attack, and for many months the only large formations of aircraft they had seen had been Allied. Several German aircraft (although not the large numbers sometimes quoted) were shot down by their own flak, and many formations were at the least disordered by needing to take evasive action. Allied flak then also took its own, heavier toll.

Despite the flak and sightings from Allied patrols already airborne, many of the German units achieved complete surprise. At Evere, near Brussels, around 90 aircraft of II/JG26 and III/JG26 caught most of Nos. 403 and

416 Squadrons taxiing for take-off, as well as a large number of communications aircraft and damaged bombers on the ground. Over 60 aircraft were destroyed or badly damaged. The JG26 units lost 19 aircraft destroyed and four damaged, mostly to flak. The RAF Regiment defended all of the British airfields with AA units, and they found easy targets as the German units broke formation and made repeated strafing runs. Allied doctrine, born out of hard experience, was to make one fast, tight pass on an airfield and then go home. German inexperience led to sloppy flying and increased casualties. Flight Lieutenant Ronnie Sheward of No. 263 Squadron at Deurne found himself "standing on the bank with my pilots, and yelling

at the Germans 'Weave you stupid bastards!'. They were flying straight and level and being shot at by the ground forces". A nearby wing commander opined that "if any of my boys put on a show like that I'd tear them off a strip".

Despite poor German technique, a few Allied airfields like Eindhoven and Evere were so crammed with aircraft that the Germans could not miss. Most formations were not so lucky. After JG6 became lost, they stumbled across B-68 at Heesch, which was still under construction but defended by flak. Large parts of the unit attacked, inflicting no real damage while getting badly shot up by the RAF Regiment. Other JG6 pilots went on to attack Eindhoven, but none reached their objective at

**"THE LAST MINUTES BEFORE WE WERE AIRBORNE SEEMED AN ETERNITY. NERVOUS FINGERS STUBBED OUT HALF-SMOKED CIGARETTES"**

*Many 2TAF airfields were crowded, providing rich targets even for inexperienced pilots*



© Alamy



© Alamy



© Alamy



© Alamy



Volkel. In all, the unit would take 43 per cent casualties for little gain.

At other airfields, the Luftwaffe ran into Allied fighters. Three Polish squadrons from St Denis Westrem were already completing their operations when the Germans of JG1 attacked their base and the nearby airfields at Ursel and Maldegem. Although nearly 80 aircraft were destroyed across these three sites, many were communications aircraft or already damaged heavy bombers. The Poles returned and, despite many being short on fuel and ammunition, bounced JG1. The Poles inflicted heavy casualties, and JG1 would take 47 per cent losses that day.

JG11 was supposed to attack an American airfield, Y-29 at Asch, but on their final approach flew over the British Y-32 at Ophoven. A few Germans peeled off to attack Ophoven, and damaged half a dozen aircraft on the ground. However, flak and a returning flight of Supermarine Spitfire Mk. XIVs from No. 610 Squadron took a heavy toll. The rest of the formation flew on to Asch, where they received an even warmer reception. The airfield was shared between the 366th Fighter Group (FG) of the US 9th Air Force, with Republic P-47 Thunderbolts for ground-attack work, and the 352nd FG of the US 8th Air Force, who used their North American P-51 Mustangs to escort 8th Air Force bombers attacking Germany. The 366th FG already had one squadron in the air and another was just taking off. Further units scrambled as the Germans swept across the field, and perhaps the largest dogfight of the day developed. For 45 minutes aircraft swirled across the area.

Lieutenant Bob Brulle, of the 390th Fighter Squadron, 366th FG, recalled, “We took off at 9.15am with the weather clear and 4/10 cloud cover at 3,000ft ... We made a 180-degree turn after take-off and formed up into a close comfortable formation as we set course for the front lines. At that point, we saw AA fire slightly over to our left. Turning to investigate we saw that a large group of German fighters were coming directly at our airstrip and were already



Source: Wiki / USAF

This Fw 190A force landed at St Trond airfield on 1 January 1945, and was repaired by the USAAF

strafing the British strip Y-32. We met the German aircraft head-on. It was composed of about 50 Me 109 and Fw 190 fighters.

“As I did a wingover and dove down to attack the enemy I could see our field and saw the 12 P-51s taking off in one big formation ... I had latched onto an Fw 190 and was already on his tail before I had my gun sight on. He dived down to the deck and was really skimming the ground. I tried to get right behind him but his prop wash almost caused me to hit the ground. I could not depress my nose enough to bring my guns to bear on the aircraft and it was hard, because of my eagerness, to hold fire even though my bullets were going over him. Once he pulled back on the throttle and I almost overshot him, but slowed down enough to prevent it.

“For a few moments we were in tight formation together, and I can still remember seeing the pilot crouched over his controls. We finally came to some trees and as he made a turning pull-up over them, I got in a good burst and he blew up hitting the ground in front of me. Another Fw 190 pulled in front of me and I started after him. I got into position behind

him and as I started firing, I saw cannon shells flying over my canopy ... Going into a steep turn I saw an Me 109 firing at me ... I kept a steep turn for about 180 degrees as his shells went behind me when the Me 109 suddenly broke off combat. I then got on the tail of another Fw 190 and was able to get a few bursts at him. There were aircraft milling around all over the place.”

The superior training and experience of the US pilots made it a one-sided victory. Two US aircraft were shot down and a few more damaged, as were half a dozen on the ground, but JG11 lost 28 of their 65 aircraft, which was a 40 per cent casualty rate.

Victory into defeat

Around 300 Allied aircraft were destroyed and another 190 damaged in the Bodenplatte attacks. Some of these aircraft were already damaged or unserviceable, and at this point in the war all were fairly easily replaced from reserves. The dozen or so pilots lost could be quickly replaced. Operations carried on almost as normal during the rest of the day, with 2TAF and US 9th Air Force launching 498 medium bomber, 228 reconnaissance and 1,430 fighter or fighter-bomber sorties. Within days the bulk of the damage had been repaired.

Bodenplatte was a crushing defeat for the Luftwaffe. Divorced from any broader strategic scheme, the attacks did little to help the German forces on the ground, while neither a plan nor indeed enough pilots were available to make follow-up attacks to press home any advantage. Their own casualties were ruinous, with around 280 aircraft lost and another 70 damaged. These might be replaced, but the 213 pilots who were lost could not be.

Eight of those lost were group or wing commanders, and a further 14 squadron commanders, while around 45 of the others could be classed as experienced personnel. The Luftwaffe simply could not replace such men. Its fighter arm would never recover from the losses.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Bodenplatte would take a terrible toll on the Luftwaffe’s most experienced, and irreplaceable, pilots. Allied losses were much less serious



✠

OBERSTLEUTNANT  
HELMUT BENNEMANN  
LUFTWAFFE, OC JG53  
SCORE: 93  
DOB: 16 MARCH 1915

✠

OBERSTLEUTNANT  
HERBERT IHLEFIELD  
LUFTWAFFE, OC JG1  
SCORE: 122  
DOB: 1 JUNE 1914

✠

LEUTNANT  
HEINRICH HACKLER  
11/JG77, LUFTWAFFE  
SCORE: 73  
DOB: 14 DECEMBER 1918

✠

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT  
TADEUSZ POWIERZA  
NO. 317 (POLISH) SQN RAF  
SCORE: 0  
DOB: 24 AUGUST 1914

✠

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT  
PETE WILSON  
NO. 438 SQN RCAF  
SCORE: 0  
DOB: UNKNOWN



BBG123



# KING & COUNTRY'S

BBG048

'Sd. Kfz. 234/1  
Panzerspahwagen'



BBG122

BBG122



BBG120



WHEN IT COMES TO THE Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 or any winter campaign on the Eastern Front during WW2 no other toy soldier company has produced as many or as varied a selection of fighting 'winter warriors' as King & Country!

Here are the latest K&C German infantrymen going into battle alongside some armoured

# Winter Warriors

BBG121



Also on display is K&C's 'Jagdpanzer IV' and the big 8-wheel 'Sd.Kfz. 234/1 Panzer-spahwagen'. Put all and impressive display for any season of the year.

## ABOUT OUR MODELS

All of our 1:30 scale figures are cast in fine white metal and hand-painted. Our fighting vehicles are mixed media utilizing polystone, white metal and resin and also hand-painted.

**KING & COUNTRY**  
**AUTHENTIC HAND-MADE HISTORY**

Available around the world wherever fine quality military miniatures are sold.

support in the depths of a cold, hard, bleak winter. **THREE** sets of snow-frosted Wehrmacht 'soldaten' can be seen here plus a 'Winter Command' set featuring one of Hitler's most aggressive, hard-driving commanders General-

BBG119

Jagdpanzer IV  
(Winter Version)



feldmarschall Walter Model standing alongside two of his senior Panzer officers.

## KING & COUNTRY SHOP

245, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway,  
Hong Kong  
Tel : (852) 2525 8603  
Website : [www.kingandcountry.com](http://www.kingandcountry.com)

## KING & COUNTRY HEADQUARTERS

Suite 2301, 23rd Floor, No.3 Lockhart Road,  
Wanchai, Hong Kong  
Tel : (852) 2861 3450 Fax : (852) 2861 3806  
E-mail : [sales@kingandcountry.com](mailto:sales@kingandcountry.com)

## KINGS X

206 Alamo Plaza, San Antonio, TX 78205, USA  
Tel : (210) 226 7000 Fax : (210) 226 7117  
E-mail : [sales@kingsx.com](mailto:sales@kingsx.com)  
Website : [www.kingsx.com](http://www.kingsx.com)



Great Battles

# QUEBEC

As two small armies faced each other on the plains above Quebec, the fate of Canada was at stake

WORDS DAVID SMITH



Major General James Wolfe expires on the battlefield as his greatest triumph unfolds behind him



**T**he French and Indian War was the inevitable result of both Britain and France establishing colonies in North America. British possessions stretched along the eastern seaboard, while the French had stakes in Louisiana and Canada, with very tenuous links set between the two.

It was a powder keg situation and the fuse was lit in the early 1750s when explorers from the British colonies decided to break out and cross the Appalachian Mountains into French territory. Clashes between colonists escalated until both sides brought in regular troops. The conflict, often considered part of the larger Seven Years' War, became a struggle for control of Canada.

By the summer of 1758, Britain was gaining the upper hand, but a concerted campaign was needed to finally break French power in North America. Sir Jeffrey Amherst was the commander-in-chief of British forces,

## "IT WAS JAMES WOLFE, A RATHER TROUBLING SUBORDINATE, WHO SAW AN OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER A FATAL BLOW BY CAPTURING THE CAPITAL OF FRENCH CANADA"

based in New York, but it was James Wolfe, a rather troubling subordinate, who saw an opportunity to deliver a fatal blow by capturing the capital of French Canada.

A complex plan was drawn up, involving three separate operations. Two of them, while important, also served as diversions for the main thrust to be made by Wolfe. He would sail up the St Lawrence River and capture Quebec.

### The siege

Wolfe's fleet and army arrived at Quebec on 27 June and an artillery bombardment commenced

by the middle of July. However, Quebec was strongly fortified against a coastal assault and getting to the landward side was tricky. Taking the city had sounded great in theory, but now the British were forced to into a siege.

Prickly and abrasive, Wolfe could also be aloof and condescending. He suffered from curious bouts of ill-health and modern opinion is that these were brought on by stress rather than actual illnesses. Notably, his most recognisable periods of ill-health coincided with some of the most troubling times of his life.



### OPPOSING FORCES



#### BRITISH

##### LEADER

Major General James Wolfe

##### INFANTRY

4,500 men

##### ARTILLERY

2 guns

VS



#### FRENCH

##### LEADER

Marquis de Montcalm

##### INFANTRY

5,000 men

##### ARTILLERY

4 or 5 guns



As his plan to take Quebec ran into difficulties, this pattern repeated itself. Wolfe became ill and lost all enthusiasm for his task. Seeing little hope of prying the French out of their strong defensive works, he grumbled about surrendering his commission and quitting the army all together.

As time ticked by, nature imposed its own deadline. Winter wasn't due to reach Quebec for some time, but the mouth of the St Lawrence, further north, would start to freeze over by the end of September. The city had to be taken by then, or Wolfe would be forced to return home in disgrace.

In his lethargic state, Wolfe put forward three uninspiring plans and his brigadiers, far from impressed by his lack of vigour, were equally unimpressed with his ideas. Instead, they advocated seizing the high ground behind the city, dominated by the Plains of Abraham. This position overlooked the city and would almost certainly force the French to offer battle.

Key to this line of thinking was a detailed report, in British possession, on the state of the city's defences on its landward side. They were believed to be insubstantial and incomplete. The French would not be able to merely sit behind them and pick off an advancing army, they would need to come out and fight the invaders.

Wolfe had no real enthusiasm for the plan but, in the face of unanimity among his brigadiers, had little choice but to agree.

### The Foulon

Planning for the audacious operation commenced, with Wolfe little more than a disgruntled passenger. It is not clear why, but the general suddenly and unexpectedly returned to full health. More than this, he became fired with enthusiasm for his task once more.

## “THINGS STARTED TO GO AWRY ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, BUT A CURIOUS MIXTURE OF GOOD LUCK AND COINCIDENCE WOULD FAVOUR THE BRITISH”

His brigadiers were bemused, but with Wolfe back on form it was they who now had little chance but to go along.

Wolfe personally scouted out potential landing spots for his army and settled on a place known as Anse au Foulon, or simply 'the Foulon'. This spot offered a route up the steep cliffs that flanked the river below Quebec and promised to put the British in position to occupy the Plains of Abraham and force the French to come out of their works.

There was only one problem with the chosen landing spot. The French were fully aware of it and had defences in place.

The French commander, Louis Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm, was a capable soldier who recognised the threat posed by the road from the Foulon. He also recognised that it was steep and narrow and confidently asserted that a guard of a hundred men could hold it against an army. He was probably right, and he had a force of a hundred men in position. However, these were Canadian militia rather than French regulars, and they were spread out along the coast rather than being concentrated at the critical point. If Wolfe's men could move quickly, they had a chance of overwhelming this guard and seizing the initiative.

The British planned to land their troops before dawn on 13 September. The army would

be ferried over in waves, with the first wave (designated a 'forlorn hope') tasked with seizing control of the road from the Foulon to allow the bulk of the army to ascend to the plains above. As is always the case with military plans, however, things started to go awry almost immediately, but a curious mixture of good luck and coincidence would favour the British.

Firstly, the Canadian militia (commanded by Captain Louis de Vergor) were expecting French supply ships to sail by on the very night chosen by the British. The supply convoy was cancelled, but nobody told de Vergor, so when British ships sailed by he thought nothing of it.

Fate then attempted to even the score. Having underestimated the strength of the tide, the first wave of eight flat-bottomed boats was swept past the designated landing site in the darkness. The entire operation was now in danger of failing before it had even started.

### The cliff

When the British troops climbed out of their boats they soon realised they were not where they were supposed to be. Dawn had not yet broken, but there was enough light to see what had gone wrong. The moment had arrived for Colonel William Howe, commanding the light infantry, to make his name.

Quickly coming to a decision, he sent part of the first wave back up the coast to find the road. Then he led three companies of his light infantry directly up the cliff, using trees and roots to haul themselves up. It was risky and desperate, but it was also quite brilliant and actually worked far better than the original plan had envisioned, because Howe and his men suddenly appeared behind the French piquets guarding the road from the Foulon.

A final stroke of luck benefited the British cause. Among Howe's men was a French-



General Wolfe assembling the British army on the Plains of Abraham to take Quebec, 1759



## BATTLE OF QUEBEC

*The scaling of the cliff face, although the men actually involved were light infantry rather than grenadiers*



Image: Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library



# QUEBEC

1759



River  
St. Lawrence

## 01 THE CITY

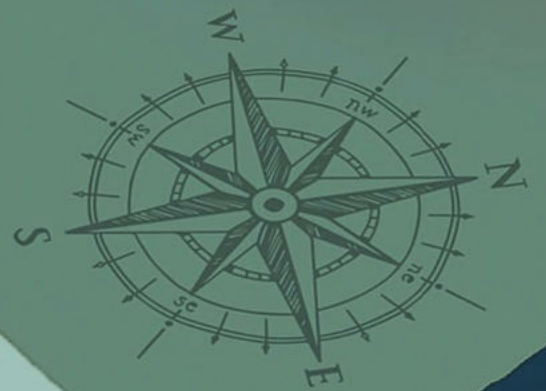
Quebec was well defended against an assault from the St. Lawrence, but the British believed its landward fortifications were incomplete and vulnerable. If troops could get into place quickly, they would be able to storm the defences before the French had time to react.

## 02 THE FOULON

The first wave of British boats lands further down river than anticipated and Colonel William Howe, leading the light infantry, has to improvise. Under his leadership, three companies of light infantry climb the steep cliff and get behind French defences at the top of the cliff road.

## 03 THE NARROW CLIFF ROAD

The bulk of the army takes the narrow and steep road up the cliff to reach the top. No horses are brought with the army, but a pair of brass six-pounders is manhandled up the road.





River  
St. Charles

● British Army  
● French Army

**08 THE VOLLEY**  
Displaying tremendous discipline, the two British regiments in the centre of Wolfe's battle line wait until the French are within 20 yards before unleashing a single, devastating volley. In that moment, Quebec is effectively captured.

**07 MONTCALM LINES UP THE FRENCH**  
Montcalm lines his men up opposite the British, but rather than awaiting his reinforcements, he makes the rash decision to attack. His two central battalions are formed up in column, intending to smash through the British centre.

**06 THE THREAT FROM CAP ROUGE**  
Aware that more French troops might arrive, Howe and the light infantry deploy to the rear of the British army, hoping to slow down any such reinforcements or at least warn the main army of their approach.

"THE TWO BRITISH REGIMENTS IN THE CENTRE OF WOLFE'S BATTLE LINE WAIT UNTIL THE FRENCH ARE WITHIN 20 YARDS BEFORE UNLEASHING A SINGLE, DEVASTATING VOLLEY"

**04 THE BRITISH LINE UP**  
Although wary of the possible approach of French troops from the rear, Wolfe gets his men into position on the Plains of Abraham. From there they can clearly see the city below them, but they can also see that the French landward defences are, in fact, complete.

**05 MONTCALM REACTS**  
The Marquis de Montcalm, who had been based at Beauport, hurries his men to meet the British threat. He slightly outnumbers Wolfe's army and can also expect reinforcements from Cap Rouge at any moment.

Map: Rocio Espin

speaking officer, Captain Donald MacDonald of the 78th Highlanders. He was able to convince the Canadian militia that he was part of a reinforcing party sent out from the city. Before the guards realised what was really happening, it was too late. The route up the road to the Plains of Abraham was secured and British soldiers began to arrive in force.

The sky was brightening by the minute as Wolfe's men made the steep climb. As they took up their initial positions on the high ground they could see the city of Quebec below them – and they could also see a formidable wall. The French defences were not incomplete and the city suddenly looked like a very tough nut to crack.

The decision to risk a landing so close to Quebec had stemmed from the need to get troops into position before the French could react. The completed wall was a problem, but the daring choice of landing spot was still working in Wolfe's favour. Montcalm, with the bulk of his French regulars, was away from the city at Beauport. This was where he had expected the British to attempt a landing and now he would have to hurry back.

The surprise element of the landing at the Foulon may have created doubt in Montcalm's mind and he had to think quickly, under intense pressure. Whatever the reason, he was about to make a disastrous decision.

### The Plains of Abraham

Further French forces were to be found at nearby Cap Rouge, and Wolfe was initially wary that these might appear on the battlefield at the same time as Montcalm, trapping him between two forces. There was no easy route to retreat in that case and a defeat would likely have been total.

His initial disposition, therefore, was neutral, with his men lined up along the top of the cliff with their backs to the river,

*Wolfe, in a portrait that is more flattering than usual*



Image: Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library



## GREAT BATTLES

*William Howe would go on to lead British forces during the first two campaigns of the American War of Independence*



Image: Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library

*Montcalm lies dying from his wounds after losing Quebec*



Image: Alamy



Image: Alamy

awaiting the French from either direction. When it became clear that the soldiers at Cap Rouge were not about to appear, Wolfe turned his men to face the city and took up a strong position on the Plains of Abraham.

Howe's light infantry, around 400 strong, remained fanned out in the rear of the army to guard against the arrival of more French troops.

The initiative was with Wolfe, but strength of position still favoured the French and the British commander was scared of being forced into a near-suicidal assault against the strong French defences.

Seeing no option, however, he formed his main battle line. Troops from the Louisburg Grenadiers stood in line with men of the 28th, 43rd, 47th, 78th and 58th Regiments of Foot. Despite the high stakes, this was a modest line, numbering little more than 1,700 men.

Further units were placed to guard the flanks, with the 35th Foot on the right (closest to the cliff edge) and the 15th Foot joining two battalions of the 60th Foot on the left. The 10th Regiment took up position as a reserve behind the main line.

At that moment, Canadian militia were the only opposition, but they skirmished so effectively, Wolfe ordered his men to lie down to avoid taking unnecessary casualties.

The day hung in the balance and much would depend on what happened when Montcalm arrived in force. While he waited, Wolfe was

forced to take up an exposed position in order to see the battlefield clearly. No horses had been brought on the expedition, and he needed to find high ground in order to see what was going on. It was risky, but there was no option if he was to direct the battle.

### Montcalm decides

The decision Montcalm made on the morning of 13 September has been debated by historians ever since. The rational choice would have been to await the arrival of further reinforcements from Cap Rouge. Getting his men into the city would have been too difficult with Wolfe's army in position, but there was no pressing need to attack.

When Montcalm arrived on the scene, the bulk of his force was made up of French regulars. He had five battalions with him, but their apparent strength had been weakened by the long campaign – losses had been made up by drafting in militia, which had weakened the effectiveness of the units. He also had two battalions of colonial troops, who were far less disciplined than his regulars.

Perhaps emboldened by the obviously modest numbers of the British force, Montcalm lined his men up opposite. The strength of his army was in the centre. There he placed two battalions aligned in column and numbering 400 men in total. These were men of the Béarn and La Guyenne battalions and were the hammer with

which he expected to crack the British line. On his right flank he placed three battalions in three-deep lines. Colonial troops were on the extreme right, with the La Sarre and Languedoc battalions inside, for a total of around 1,100 men.

The French left was held by two more battalions (the Royal-Roussillon and more colonial troops) in a three-deep line numbering 550.

There were as many as 1,500 Canadian militia, swarming around the British flanks but unable to seriously affect the outcome of the coming confrontation. The French also probably had either four or five guns – reports vary.

In contrast to the French formations, Wolfe's soldiers were mostly arranged in just two ranks. This was still a novel arrangement for the British Army as a whole, but had been adopted as standard practice in North America. Even so, the gaps between files were larger than usual (three feet rather than two) and there was more than 30 metres between each regiment. It was not a particularly formidable line.

The situation, however, appeared to be changing. Montcalm could see the British bringing two six-pounder brass cannons onto the field (some sources claim there were three guns, others that there was just one).

It may have appeared to the French commander that the British were bringing more reinforcements into play. If that were the case, then attacking quickly might have seemed the most prudent course of action.





*All elements of the day's activities are captured simultaneously in this action-packed view of the battle*

Montcalm was heard to mutter the words “c’est une affaire sérieuse”. It was indeed serious business – the fate of French Canada was hanging in the balance. Having weighed up the options, Montcalm made his decision. He would attack.

### The battle

The Battle of the Plains of Abraham, as it is alternatively known, was a clash of doctrines. The British favoured discipline and calm musketry. The French favoured mass and the bayonet. Thus, the contest boiled down to the centre of both lines, where the French advanced two battalions in column, while two British battalions waited patiently in two-deep lines.

Firing broke out on the flanks of both armies, but the British were far more effective, waiting until the French were within 40 yards before delivering disciplined volleys.

In the centre, the 43rd and 47th Regiments of Foot were even more patient. They let the two large columns of French troops close to within 20 yards before opening fire. They had an ace up their sleeves as well. According to orders from Wolfe, who had given much thought on how to tackle the terrifying power of a French advance in column, the men of the two British battalions had loaded their muskets with not one ball, but two. A total of 452 men levelled their weapons at the French and fired, but they delivered around 900 musket balls.

**“IT WAS INDEED SERIOUS BUSINESS – THE FATE OF FRENCH CANADA WAS HANGING IN THE BALANCE. HAVING WEIGHED UP THE OPTIONS, MONTCALM MADE HIS DECISION. HE WOULD ATTACK.”**

The volley was devastating. Captain John Knox, of the 43rd, remarked that it was ‘as remarkable a close and heavy discharge, as I ever saw’. And it was enough to completely break the French.

An estimated 156 Frenchmen were killed in the short battle, with around 450 taken prisoner. Considering the bulk of the French turned tail and ran, many of those taken prisoner must have been wounded.

An unusually high number of officers were casualties, on both sides. For the British, the most crushing loss was that of Wolfe himself. Forced to observe the battle from an exposed position, he fell while the French were still advancing and needed to be reassured that his final battle had been won.

The French commander, on the other hand, lived to see his army broken, but was mortally wounded during the retreat.

### The aftermath

The standard interpretation, that a single volley won Canada for the British (and all before breakfast) is stretching facts a little. Victory allowed the British to take Quebec (which surrendered on 18 September), but holding it was no easy matter. The British had suffered heavy casualties as well, and in the ensuing months they lost hundreds of men to disease.

A fierce battle was fought on 28 April the following year. This time it was the British who ventured out of Quebec to confront an attacking French army. The battle was a defeat for the British, but they weakened the French so much they were unable to storm the city.

Canada was not secured until Royal Navy ships arrived on the scene before French vessels could get there, relieving the town and bringing fresh troops. Canada was now British.

Despite these inconvenient truths, Quebec remains a hugely significant victory for the British, a key part of the nation’s ‘annus mirabilis’, the ‘year of wonders’. Victories in Europe, India and North America were joined by naval triumphs that effectively won the Seven Years’ War. Horace Walpole famously commented, “Our bells are worn threadbare with ringing for victories.”



# MALTA'S SPIRIT

British fighter pilot Allan Scott DFM reveals how he survived the most bombed place of WWII while flying one of the most iconic aircraft in aviation history

Image: RAF Benevolent Fund



**D**escribed by Winston Churchill as an “unsinkable aircraft carrier”, the Mediterranean island of Malta endured an excruciating, sustained bombing campaign during 1940-42. A strategically vital fortress, Malta was virtually obliterated by German and Italian aircraft but it was successfully defended by a dogged garrison who held out against overwhelming odds.

One of the keys to this achievement was the presence of RAF Spitfires on the island. Although their pilots were heavily outnumbered, they shot down hundreds of Axis aircraft disproportionate to their numbers. This was no accident because the fliers were largely seasoned fighters who had cut their teeth defending the United Kingdom from invasion. Among them was Allan Scott, an experienced airman who had already shot

down a German aircraft during the closing stages of the Battle of Britain.

Scott flew at the Siege of Malta during its final and most intense months in 1942 and in this time he shot down five enemy aircraft. Ultimately credited with six confirmed aerial victories during WWII, he is the last surviving ‘ace’ of Malta. Now aged 98, his story is a vivid recollection of ferocious dogfights, constant bombardments, gruelling privations and an enduring affection for the iconic Spitfire.

### “It fitted you like a glove”

Born in 1921, Scott became “hooked” on flying at the age of ten when his father booked him a ride on a De Havilland Fox Moth, “The Alan Cobham Flying Circus came to Southport Sands and I went with my dad. A lot of people were still wary of flying in the 1930s and I was really keen. I said to my dad that I’d like to fly with

them and that’s what I did for just half a crown! From that day onwards the seed was sown and I knew I was going to be a pilot.”

Scott’s ambition never wavered and he joined the RAF in early 1940 at the age of just 18, “You first went through a selection board where you’d be passed as aircrew. Then you’d be passed to become a fighter pilot, bomber pilot, observer etc. I always felt that I’d be a fighter pilot because that was my nature and it turned out that I was picked.”

While Western Europe fell to the Nazis and the Battle of Britain raged over the skies of England, Scott was training on the Miles Magister monoplane and then the Hawker Hurricane. His education was swift due to the RAF’s demand for qualified fliers, “Once you flew solo that’s when you got your ‘wings’. They were short of pilots in 1940 because of the Battle of Britain so they rushed you through training as fast as

*Inset, far left: Scott pictured shortly before taking off in a Spitfire for a flight to commemorate the centenary of the RAF, 1 April 2018*

Image: Alamy



# SPITFIRE AGE

WORDS TOM GARNER

**“ALTHOUGH THEIR PILOTS WERE HEAVILY OUTNUMBERED, THEY SHOT DOWN HUNDREDS OF AXIS AIRCRAFT DISPROPORTIONATE TO THEIR NUMBERS”**



Image: Allan Scott

*A Flight, 124 Squadron pose in front of a Spitfire at RAF Biggin Hill. Scott is third from the right*

*An artist's impression of 15 September 1940 during the Battle of Britain. Scott, himself a veteran of the battle, would have encountered similar dogfights over Malta. He understatedly describes these chaotic scenes as “a bit of a dicey do”*



# THE DECORATED ISLAND

For its resilience against Axis attacks, King George VI awarded Malta the civilian equivalent of the Victoria Cross

The George Cross was instituted by George VI on 24 September 1940 to replace the Empire Gallantry Medal. It is the second highest award in the United Kingdom's honours system and is awarded "for acts of heroism or for most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger". Both civilians and military personnel can receive the award for bravery that is not in the presence of the enemy and in 1942 a special case was made for the island of Malta.

On 15 April 1942, George VI awarded the George Cross to Malta in a letter to the island's governor, Lieutenant General Sir William Dobbie. He wrote in the handwritten letter, "To honour her brave

people I award the George Cross to the Island Fortress of Malta to bear witness to a heroism and devotion that will long be famous in history." Dobbie subsequently replied, "By God's help Malta will not weaken but will endure until victory is won."

Due to the siege, the formal presentation of the award was delayed until 13 September 1942. It was presented to the people and garrison at a ceremony at the Palace Square in Valetta. The George Cross was then incorporated into the islands' flag in 1943 and remains on the official flag of the Republic of Malta. The medal and the king's letter are now displayed in the National War Museum at Fort Saint Elmo, Valetta.

**"TO HONOUR HER BRAVE PEOPLE I AWARD THE GEORGE CROSS TO THE ISLAND FORTRESS OF MALTA TO BEAR WITNESS TO A HEROISM AND DEVOTION THAT WILL LONG BE FAMOUS IN HISTORY"**

**– George VI**

Although the George Cross was collectively presented to Malta it was also individually awarded to Captain Dudley Mason, the master of the oil tanker SS Ohio during Operation Pedestal

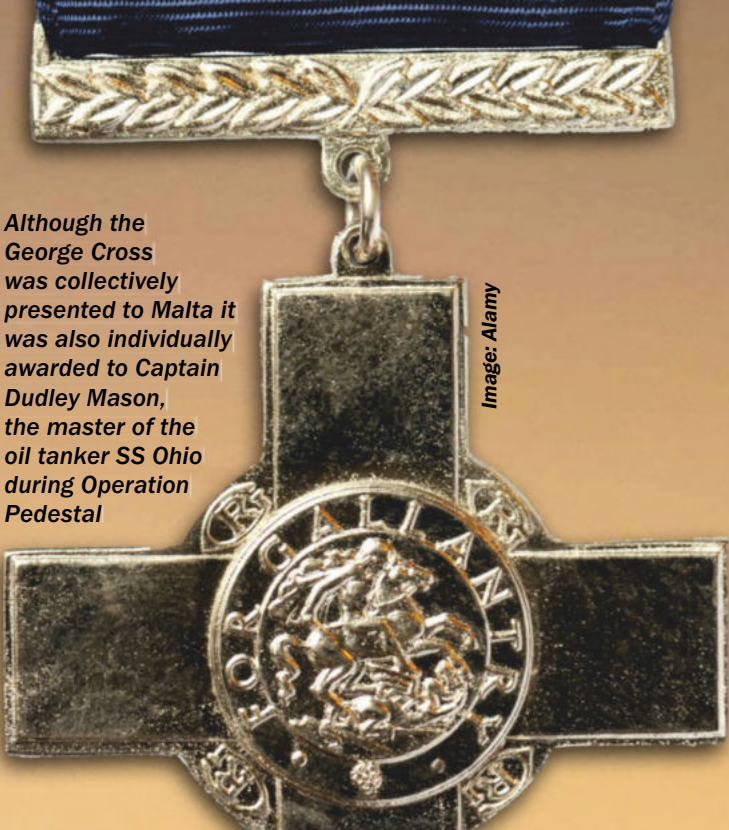


Image: Alamy

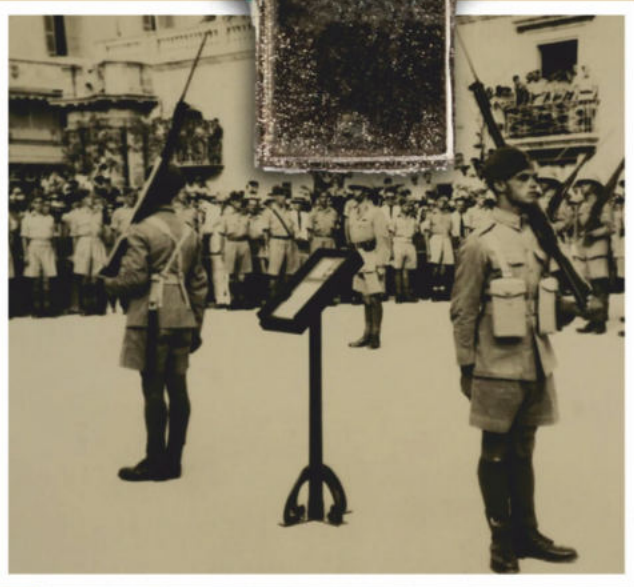


Image: Alamy

Right: Two soldiers guard the George Cross and George VI's letter during their ceremonial presentation in Valetta, 13 September 1942



Image: Alamy

Above: A cargo ship enters the Grand Harbour of Valetta under a heavy aerial bombardment

Image: Alamy

Below: Children pictured in the damaged streets of Malta during the siege



Image: Alamy





Image: Alamy

Scott flew a Spitfire Mk Vb on Malta. The Mk V was the first Spitfire to be used in large numbers outside Britain with the Vb variant being equipped with two 20mm cannons as well as machine-guns

they could. For example, I was on the Hurricane for a very short time of about a week before we were put onto Spitfires."

Although the Hurricane was the most numerous British fighter aircraft during the Battle of Britain, the Supermarine Spitfire became the most famous. Scott was, and remains, enamoured of the aeroplane, "The Spitfire was marvellous. It was very useful in combat because it fitted you like a glove or overcoat. When you turned, the aircraft turned and you didn't have to think about flying. The Spitfire behaved with you so it was wonderful manoeuvrable aircraft."

### Battle of Britain

Although the heaviest period of aerial fighting during the Battle of Britain was officially during July-October 1940, clashes between RAF and Luftwaffe aircraft over British skies continued throughout the following year. It was under these circumstances that Scott was posted as a Spitfire sergeant pilot to 124 Squadron at RAF Biggin Hill in early 1941.

Located in the Greater London borough of Bromley, Biggin Hill was one of the principal fighter bases that protected the approaches to the capital and south east England. During WWII, its fighters claimed a total of approximately 1,400 enemy aircraft and the base lost over 450 of its aircrew. Scott recalls, "The Battle of Britain was still going on of course in early 1941. Although it was at the tail end there were still losses." In April 1941 alone, 124 Squadron lost nine pilots.

During this time, King George VI visited Biggin Hill. Scott, who was photographed shaking hands with him, greatly admired the British monarch, "He came down to the airfield while we were going out on sorties. He took an interest in us and was so kind and considerate. He was a wonderful king, an absolutely marvellous guy."

While serving with 124 Squadron, Scott achieved his first aerial victory over the Essex coast, "It was a Junkers Ju 88 that was trying to escape out of Clacton-on-Sea. I spotted the aircraft and clobbered him. It was a thrill because I was only 19."

Despite the exhilaration, Scott was pleased that the enemy crew survived, "They managed to bail out and I'm always glad of that. When you shoot an aircraft down you're not aiming to kill the pilot, you want to get rid of the aircraft. It was always satisfying if you knocked the aircraft out

of the sky and the crew, if it was a bomber, bailed out. It was the same with a fighter and you hoped that the fella would get out. However, when you're aiming for an aircraft as small as that it was difficult to miss the pilot as well."

### A Mediterranean hotspot

After Biggin Hill, Scott's next deployment would be a besieged island whose wartime experience was both horrific and heroic. At only 17 miles (27 kilometres) long and nine miles (14.5 kilometres) wide, Malta is a tiny island. During WWII, its central position between North Africa and Fascist Italy made it an essential military base for Allied forces in the Mediterranean Sea.

A British colony since 1815, Malta was well positioned to allow the Allies to intercept or harry Axis supplies or reinforcements from Italian depots to their forces in North Africa. Nevertheless, the presence of the Regia Aeronautica (Italian Royal Air Force) on Sicily and mainland Italy convinced the British that the island could not be the main base for their Mediterranean Fleet. Operations were therefore conducted from Alexandria, Egypt, while the French Navy would dominate the western part of the sea. However, the fall of France in May 1940 obliged the British to concentrate naval power from Gibraltar and make the defence of Malta a priority.

Initially, only a small number of obsolete Gloster Sea Gladiators formed the aerial defence of the island. Axis operations against Malta began after Italy joined the war in June 1940 along with the beginning of the North African Campaign. British-led forces performed well against the Italians in Libya, which forced the Germans to deploy the Afrika Korps under Erwin Rommel in early 1941. Although the 'Desert Fox' was a much more formidable foe, his links to supplies and reinforcements from Europe were precarious thanks to Malta's garrison.

Rommel warned in May 1941, "Without Malta, the Axis will end by losing control of North Africa." The Germans and Italians consequently stepped up their air campaign against the island. The British had replaced their Gladiators with Hurricanes but their outnumbered pilots struggled in the face of almost relentless Axis bomber raids and fighter attacks. By the end of 1941, the British were suffering serious naval losses in the Mediterranean, which affected the flow of supplies needed to reinforce Malta. At one point, only 7,500 of 26,000 tons of supplies from Alexandria managed to reach the island and both military personnel and civilians suffered great hardships.

Despite the fact that Malta was becoming subjected to the most sustained and



Scott (middle row, second from right) pictured with 124 Squadron at RAF Biggin Hill, 1941. His fellow pilots hailed not just from Britain but also from Belgium, Canada, France, Poland, Norway and even Mauritius

Image: RAF Benevolent Fund



MALTA'S SPITFIRE ACE

concentrated bombing campaign of the war, Allied fighters continued to be flown in. The first Spitfire Mk Vs were flown in during March-April 1942 from three aircraft carriers. They continued to deliver more Spitfires through May-June and the fighters proved more than a match for the previously dominant Messerschmitt Bf 109.

Experienced Allied pilots were now able to shoot down increasing numbers of enemy aircraft. This included Canadian pilot George Beurling who destroyed 27 Axis aircraft within a fortnight in July 1942. It was during this month that Scott arrived to an island that was being reduced to rubble.

“Welcome to Malta”

Scott had been deployed for his second combat tour and had some awareness of the grim situation, “You knew that it was a bit tough flying around there from returning pilots who had already done six months. Mind you, they didn’t have the really tough time we had because we had the final Axis push to get rid of the island. We were there during the most intense period during August-October 1942.”

Sailing from the UK in early July 1942, Scott travelled by sea to Gibraltar. Once there, he boarded HMS Eagle along with 36 Spitfires. This was the second contingent of aerial resupplies to Malta to make up the numbers for constant losses. Scott remembers that the journey was perilous, “If you flew to Malta there was every chance you could be shot down so we had to go by sea. We went on the carriers that took us 1,000 miles down the Mediterranean and then flew off them to get to Malta. We RAF pilots were scared stiff about flying off a carrier and we also had to go past the island of Pantelleria, which had a Messerschmitt squadron on it. It was hazardous all the way.”

With only enough fuel to fly to Malta itself, Scott and his fellow Spitfire pilots arrived at Takali airfield on 21 July 1942 in the middle of an air raid. Whilst attempting to land with his undercarriage down, Scott was intercepted by an enemy fighter, “I suddenly found a Messerschmitt on my tail. He didn’t stick

“WE RAF PILOTS WERE SCARED STIFF ABOUT FLYING OFF A CARRIER AND WE ALSO HAD TO GO PAST THE ISLAND OF PANTELLERIA, WHICH HAD A MESSERSCHMITT SQUADRON ON IT. IT WAS HAZARDOUS ALL THE WAY”



HMS Fearless seen in the background on fire after being hit while escorting a convoy to Malta, April 1942



Image: Getty

Image: Alamy





*Junkers Ju 88 bombers  
bomb Valetta while a  
Spitfire engages with an  
Italian Macchi MC-202 fighter*



# "THEY WANTED TO GET TROOPS AND AMMUNITION TO ROMMEL IN NORTH AFRICA. WE WERE STOPPING IT SO WE WERE A THORN IN THEIR SIDE"



Sergeant Pilot Allan Scott pictured shaking hands with King George VI during a visit to RAF Biggin Hill in 1941

Scott and his parents outside Buckingham Palace on the day that he received the Distinguished Flying Medal from George VI. He also briefly met Princess Elizabeth (the future Elizabeth II) for the first time

Images: RAF Benevolent Fund

around for long and when I turned around he flew off. He didn't come back and I managed to turn and land. That was my introduction to the siege and I said, 'Welcome to Malta. My God, here we come!'

## Bombardments and biscuits

When Scott arrived on Malta he joined 603 Squadron, but it was disbanded within days. A new unit, 1435 Squadron, was formed and Scott joined that at RAF Luqa for the duration of his tour. Located 2.7 miles (4.3 kilometres) from Valetta, Luqa was one of three airfields (as well as the capital's Grand Harbour) that became principal Axis targets in the wake of the second arrival of Spitfires.

Luftwaffe and Italian squadrons were based only 60 miles (97 kilometres) away on Sicily and this resulted in multiple raids almost every day, "We'd come under attack sometimes four times a day during the peak periods although it depended on the number of heavy raids coming in. Sometimes we only had four Spitfires that were serviceable so it was a bit tough. You scrambled and kept going up to get over and ahead of the bombers before you got down on the ground and refuelled. They'd rearm you quickly and you'd be ready to go up again. It wasn't every day of course but we never did less than two scrambles a day."

Against this onslaught, Scott also had to contend with horrendous ground conditions. Thanks to disrupted supply lines, Malta was acutely deprived of resources. For the pilots,

who were providing the front line defence from air attacks, starvation greatly added to their problems, "Conditions were pretty tough and we had no food of course. We lived on ship's biscuits, which were really hard and you could break your teeth on them. The cook used to put them all in a pail of water, which made a mushy mess that acted as a pudding. We ate that and it kept us alive because it had vitamins and mushy pudding was far better than eating the biscuit. I eventually lost four stone in weight because we had nothing to eat."

The squadron was also exposed to continual bombardments when they weren't flying, "The civilians also didn't have much to eat and they'd lost their homes. However, they were safe because they lived in the caves whereas we lived on top where we got all the strafing and bombing. Outside our mess there was an anti-aircraft battalion and they were going 'BOOM! BOOM!' all the time. You got used to that and could even sleep through it because we were so tired. However, we were airborne most of the time."

## Dogfights

Although the Siege of Malta had been underway in various stages since 1940, Scott flew during its most intense time towards the end of the siege, "The siege finished in October 1942 but the months before then was Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's push to get rid of the island and they threw everything in. It was important to them because they wanted to get troops and ammunition to Rommel in North Africa.

We were stopping it so we were a thorn in their side. For our own purposes, we wanted to keep Malta open because it was keeping the Mediterranean open for us. So it was a very important little island."

Flying against Messerschmitt fighters and bombers such as the Heinkel He 111, Dornier Do 17 and Junkers Ju 88, the Spitfires had to prevent Malta from being pulverised, "The fighters were just in the way and our main task was shooting at the bombers. They came in droves and you had to pick one.

"We used to try and pick the Gruppenführer in front because if you hit him first he wouldn't be giving anybody instructions. The Germans were all hidebound about getting told what to do and if the Gruppenführer was not telling them they'd mill around for a bit, which made it easier to shoot them down."

To destroy enemy aircraft, Scott deployed various methods, "First of all, you had to climb like hell to get above the enemy aircraft. You could usually get above them because they flew at roughly 15,000 feet whereas we could get up to 20,000 feet very quickly. However, we never got above the Messerschmitts who were sitting at 36,000 feet.

"You then had to pick your target but you could only stay on it for about three seconds or less. This was because you would fire and turn before a Messerschmitt came down to find you. You also had to miss your own colleagues because there were aircraft all over the sky. It was one mass of bidding aeroplanes and





An entry from Scott's log book dated 17 December 1941. The victory against the Junkers 88 was marked by a hand-drawn swastika and Scott wrote by the side that the incident was "rather exciting"

Scott's medals, including his Distinguished Flying Medal (far left) and Malta George Cross 50th Anniversary Medal (far right) pictured lying on top of his pilot's log book

there were quite a few collisions. If you turned and were not thinking you could hit an aircraft. Altogether, there was the risk of collision and the risk of being shot down by a Messerschmitt so it was a bit of a dicey do!"

To counter the threat from the fighters, Scott developed his own method to avoid being shot down, "They always used to come out of the sun and were crafty so I always came in on a turn. The idea was that if a Messerschmitt wanted to fire at me, he had to come in sideways and turn with me. If he started coming in by the side I could see him without having to crane my neck. I would then go in on a turn, gave him a quick squirt and then turn again. I was always a turner, which was a saving factor."

Scott also used another tactic that was useful against direct enemy fighter attacks, "You never wanted them to attack you head-on because they had a cannon that fired straight through the hub of the propeller whereas we'd have to get to within 300 yards to fire at them. When you saw one coming I devised a method where I always 'side-slipped'. Using instinct, you could easily put to the side during a head-on attack. They'd notice you but you'd then be able to turn back on him.

"When I landed back in Malta I used to the side-slip again because they were strafing [the airfield]. You watched the strafe go through and then you had time to get down before the next wave came in. I side-slipped from 1,000 feet to 500 feet, landed quickly, got to a pen and then dived for a slit trench!"

With fighting conditions like this, Scott's Luftwaffe counterparts were formidable opponents, "They weren't duffers by any means and they knew what they were doing. They had their own tactics of course and were able to put their fighters' noses down. We couldn't do that in the Spitfire because the carburettor would start off but they had fuel injection.

"If you went behind them they would just drop and you couldn't do much about it. You'd have to roll and come down after them but by that time they were away."

Another problem Scott had to contend with was his aircraft's limited amount of ammunition, "The Spitfire Vb was armed with two cannons and eight machine guns. It fired 600 rounds per minute and I usually shot down aircraft in three-second bursts. Your ammunition would last for about nine minutes but I often ran out of ammo. You then had to get out of the way because you were now useless and couldn't do anything. I used to spiral down to the sea and try to get back to Malta."

During one of these incidents, Scott experienced a hair-raising escape, "The Germans would soon spot you going down to the sea. On one occasion I had two fighters following me at the same time. They realised I hadn't got any ammo because I had been on their tail not doing anything. It turned into a stalemate because they were running out of fuel and had to get back to Sicily. The most amazing thing then happened. We all wagged our wings and made rude signs at each other.

They then peeled off back to Sicily, thank God!" Scott explains that a curious aerial chivalry existed between the opposing pilots, "The Germans were good fliers but big-headed. They would obey an order right to the end and were almost too efficient. You would prey on that of course but I met a lot of Luftwaffe pilots after the war and became good friends with some of them. They were gentlemen the same as ourselves and they just said, 'Well, we had to shoot you down. You also had to shoot us down and it was our job'."

The Germans might have been Scott's primary foe but he also came across Italian aircraft, "You always knew an Italian because he would do aerobatics everywhere and it was very difficult to get a sight on him. He would twist and turn and to get a quick burst on him was sheer luck." As fate would have it, it would be an Italian aircraft that Scott would encounter during one of the most pivotal moments of the siege.

## Operation Pedestal

By August 1942, the situation on Malta was at its worst stage and Allied commanders knew it might be forced to surrender if enough supplies did not get through by the end of the month. Operation Pedestal planned to send 14 merchant vessels guarded by 64 warships to reach the island. This attempt required the convoy to sail past enemy bombers, mines and U-boats. Critical to Pedestal's success was the delivery of the oil tanker SS Ohio with her cargo of 11,000 tons of fuel for Allied aircraft on Malta.



Allan Scott flew in a Spitfire again for RAF 100 in April 2018. He can also be heard being interviewed on the RAF Benevolent Fund's 'All Stations' podcast. To listen visit: [www.rafbf.org/all-stations-podcast](http://www.rafbf.org/all-stations-podcast)



# RAF BENEVOLENT FUND

This military charity has been tirelessly helping British air force personnel and their dependents for a century

The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund is the leading welfare charity supporting current and former members of the RAF, their partners and families, providing practical, emotional and financial support,

whenever they need it. Founded in 1919 just one year after the formation of the air force, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the Benevolent Fund. To mark the occasion, the charity has launched a campaign to double the number of people it supports.

Allan Scott is an ambassador for the RAF Benevolent Fund and is enthusiastic about the support they provide for those in need, "I help them because they help people in distress. There are lots of families coming out of the air force now in really dire circumstances. The Benevolent Fund helps them in most ways, money-wise and welfare."

**If you know an RAF veteran, or their partner in need, contact the Fund at [www.rafbf.org](http://www.rafbf.org) or by telephone on 0300 102 1919.**

Images: RAF Benevolent Fund

The convoy began sailing in early August 1942 but suffered terrible losses en route through the Mediterranean, "They were attacked all the way from Gibraltar and were really hammered. The main target for the enemy was the Ohio. That meant fuel and food for us so they really went to town on it."

The Ohio was torpedoed and heavily bombed between 12-13 August but limped on. As the convoy approached Malta, all three of the island's squadrons flew to give the ships continuous air cover. During one sortie with four Spitfires, Scott encountered an Italian Breda Ba.88 that was attacking a ship, "I saw this bomber out of the corner of my eye that was doing a bombing run. I thought, 'Well, I'm here' and wondered if I could do a beam shot on it."

A beam shot was a firing tactic that required precision, "When you had to fire in front of an approaching enemy aircraft, he would fly into the bullets. The gun sight is ringed and you allowed approximately eight rings that you thought would be the right point where the aircraft would run into your bullets."

"I was lucky in that I guessed eight rings when the Breda was coming in. I fired and the timing was exactly right because he blew up. He

had a full load of bombs and the air was full of debris." This victory not only helped save the ship but was a rare confirmed victory against a bomber, "When you normally hit a bomber you couldn't claim it as 'destroyed' because they often tried to get back on one engine etc. Unless you saw them bail out or crash, they were always a 'probable'."

Of all the ships that set out for Pedestal, Malta's Spitfires only covered the entrance of four vessels into Valetta's Grand Harbour on 15 August. Nevertheless, this included the heavily damaged but still floating Ohio. Its precious cargo was just enough to keep the siege going, "Once the tanker was in that gave us all fuel for the Spitfires and food. There was great delight from the Maltese and they [ran] down to the quayside to cheer the Ohio. It really was an important ship to get in."

## A "guardian angel"

Throughout his time on Malta, Scott was surrounded by the impact of severe RAF losses. He found the only way to cope with the continuing casualties was to become – in his words – "callous", "Our life expectancy as fighter pilots was 20 minutes. When you came

down from a sortie you would say 'Where's so-and-so?' and they'd say 'He got the chop'. You just accepted it, said something like 'Oh really?' and carried on. That's what I mean by 'callous'. Let's be honest, you were scared most of the time and were a bit worried because, for all you knew, you could be next."

Nevertheless, Scott survived the siege "without a scratch", "All my flying was instinctive but surviving was a combination of skill and luck. You had to have the skill to fly a Spitfire properly and if you did that it would never let you down. Then of course, I always say that I had a 'guardian angel' which must have been on my side somewhere. I actually thought that my guardian angel was my dad. It was just one of those things you thought but it brought me through all the battles and combat. To survive without a scratch was a unique thing."

Although Operation Pedestal began to ease conditions on Malta, the siege dragged on for months. Albert Kesselring eventually called off the Axis offensive and by November 1942, Allied air and sea superiority over the island was secured. The statistics for Malta's suffering were horrendous: 3,343 registered air raids, 15,000 tons of bombs dropped and over 9,000 civilian, military and merchant casualties. 10,761 buildings had also been destroyed or extensively damaged with Scott recalling, "They really did flatten it and there wasn't a building standing when I left."

**"YOU HAD TO HAVE THE SKILL TO FLY A SPITFIRE PROPERLY AND IF YOU DID THAT IT WOULD NEVER LET YOU DOWN"**





*The Spitfires of 1435 Squadron take a rest between raids during the siege*

*Image: Allan Scott*

*Image: Alamy*



*Although his primary task was to destroy German bombers, Scott's principal fighter nemesis was the Messerschmitt Bf 109*

With the lifting of the siege, Scott was relieved to return home, "We were saying 'Thank God we can get off this hell of an island!'. We didn't like it because of the bombs and strafing and we were glad to get out as soon as we could. We went back to the UK for a long leave to recover from the combat and calm our nerves."

Hundreds of aircraft on both sides had been destroyed in Malta with Scott claiming five confirmed aerial victories. Now an 'ace' fighter pilot, Scott was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM) and met George VI again when he was decorated at Buckingham Palace. He was also commissioned as a pilot officer and went on to complete a third combat tour conducting escort flights in P-51 Mustangs over Europe with 122 Squadron.

### **"I owe it everything"**

After the war, Scott remained with the RAF and became a test pilot. He flew almost 100 different kinds of new aircraft including the Gloster Meteor, De Havilland Vampire, Hawker Hunter and the English Electric Lightning. Although he retired from the RAF in 1976 as a squadron leader, Scott continued to fly until he was 70 and plans to revisit his old aircraft for a special occasion, "I'm going to fly the Spitfire again on my 100th birthday. It'll have to be the two-seater trainer and a dual flight because of the insurance but I know the pilot and he's an

excellent flier. On previous occasions he hands over control to me as soon as we get airborne and says, 'It's all yours, Allan' I fly it, roll it and do whatever I want. I don't want to wish my life away but I'm looking forward to it."

For someone who survived the Battle of Britain and Siege of Malta, Scott explains that

the Spitfire saved his life, "I owe it everything because it brought me right through the war unscathed. This was because it was a wonderful aircraft and flying it properly got you out of trouble. Of course it makes you think, 'Well, that's it. It's the best aircraft in the world'. It was part of you and I thought the world of it."



*Thousands of Malta's buildings were destroyed or badly damaged during the siege including Valetta's Grand Opera House*

*Image: Alamy*



*Allan Scott is the author of the memoir Born To Survive, which is published by Ellingham Press. For more information visit: [www.ellinghampress.co.uk](http://www.ellinghampress.co.uk)*



**HISTORY  
WAR**

**SUBSCRIBE TODAY &**

**LIMITED  
TIME ONLY!**

**SAVE  
50%**

**ON A SUBSCRIPTION TO HISTORY OF WAR MAGAZINE**

Subscribe for just £16 every 6 months\*

**TO ORDER ONLINE VISIT**

[www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/war/war76](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/war/war76)

**OR CALL 0344 848 2852 & QUOTE WAR76**





## REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE...

- ★ You'll never miss an issue
- ★ It's delivered direct to your front door
- ★ Brilliant value – save money on the cover price
- ★ Upgrade to print & digital for just £1.25

# CHOOSE YOUR PACKAGE



## PRINT

Half price  
Six-month  
subscription to  
History of War

SAVING  
50%

£16.00



## PRINT & DIGITAL

Upgrade to a **Six-month** History of War subscription in both print & digital for **only £1.25 more!**

£17.25

**\*Terms and conditions:** This offer entitles new UK Direct Debit subscribers to pay just £16 every 6 months saving 50% off the cover price. Pricing will revert to our standard offer of £20.50 every 6 months (print) and £23 every 6 months (print and digital) on the third payment made. You will receive 13 issues in a year. You can write to us or call us to cancel your subscription within 14 days of purchase. Payment is non-refundable after the 14 day cancellation period unless exceptional circumstances apply. Your statutory rights are not affected. Prices correct at point of print and subject to change. Full details of the Direct Debit guarantee are available upon request. UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) or are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). **For full terms and conditions please visit: [bit.ly/magtandc](http://bit.ly/magtandc). Offer ends 31st January 2020.**





Above: Baldwin receiving the homage of the Armenians in Edessa

**“THOROS ADOPTED  
BALDWIN AS HIS SON IN  
A FORMAL CEREMONY,  
AND HE ARRANGED FOR  
HIS NEW CO-RULER TO  
INHERIT THE WALLED  
CITY UPON HIS DEATH”**

## BALDWIN I

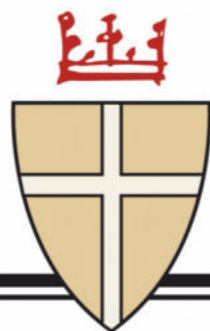
Baldwin was crowned the first king of Jerusalem in a ceremony on 25 December 1100 at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Daimbert, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, anointed him.

During his 18-year reign as King of Jerusalem, Baldwin matured far beyond the glory-seeking days of the First Crusade becoming lucid, pragmatic and visionary. His early achievements included conquering the southern Levantine seaboard and establishing tight control over the church of Jerusalem.

In his later years he controlled the distribution of lordships and fiefs within his kingdom, initiated the settlement of the Trans-Jordan region and established overlordship over the other crusader states.







# CRUSADER OVERLORD

The first sovereign of the Kingdom of Jerusalem successfully defended it against repeated invasions by powerful Egyptian and Turkish foes

WORDS WILLIAM E. WELSH

**I**n August 1096 Godfrey of Boulogne, the duke of Lower Lorraine, set out on the First Crusade with his two brothers, Eustace and Baldwin, at the head of an army of pilgrim crusaders from his territories. His older brother Eustace was Count of Boulogne, and his younger brother Baldwin was a trained cleric who held benefices in several French dioceses. Baldwin, though, had decided to abandon the cloth and take up the sword. Godfrey eagerly welcomed his brothers' assistance leading the soldiers of Lorraine and Burgundy. The army embarked on the long overland trek that would take it to Constantinople, where it would join forces with armies from France and southern Italy, recruited by prominent regional princes. The crusader army would then fight its way through Muslim-held territory in Anatolia and the Levant to Jerusalem.

As a landless younger son, Baldwin was eager to find his fortune in the East. He yearned for an opportunity whereby he might find plunder and conquer territory. Baldwin saw action at Dorylaeum in eastern Anatolia in July 1097 when the 50,000-strong crusader army engaged the Seljuk Turks of Rum, a branch of the Great Seljuk Sultanate, in a pitched battle. Baldwin, who was with his brothers in the main body, rode forward to help Duke Bohemond of Taranto's beleaguered vanguard. When their losses mounted in the face of a heavily reinforced foe, the Turks withdrew. Although won at a heavy cost in casualties, the victory boosted crusader morale.

When the army reached Heraclea, the senior leaders sent Baldwin and Tancred, Bohemond's Norman nephew, on a reconnaissance-in-force to clear Armenian Cilicia of Seljuk forces. This would secure the southern flank of the main force of the crusader army.

Tancred led the way and Baldwin followed a day's ride behind him. The two lords clashed

over plunder at Tarsus and Mamistra, both of which were wrested from the Turks. Leaving behind garrisons to hold the towns, they rode to rejoin the main force. Baldwin would soon depart on another expedition. This time, though, he would not have to contend with a rival Latin lord.

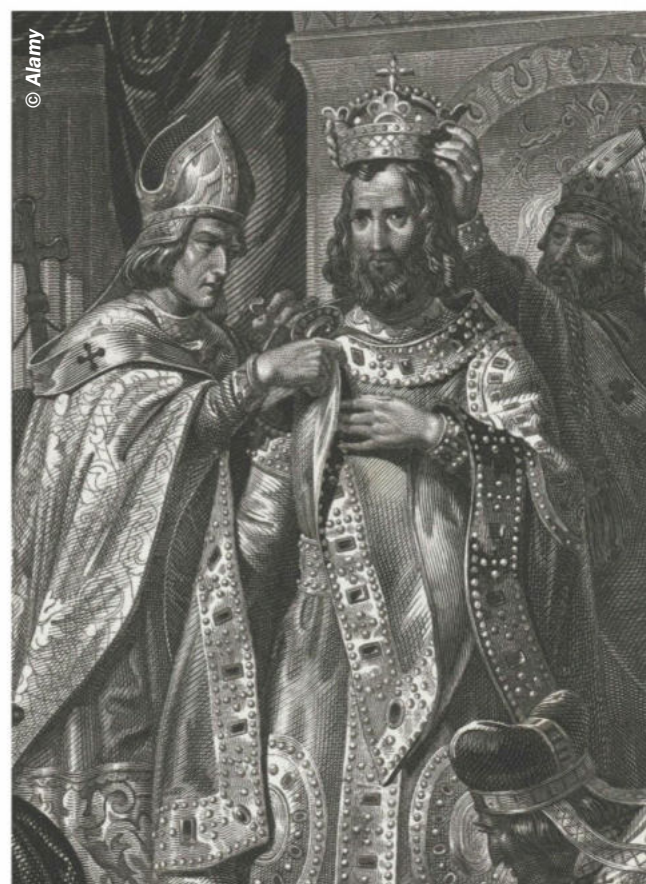
## Conquest of Edessa

While temporarily reunited with the crusader main army at Marash, Baldwin met with two Armenians who requested his aid against the alleged tyranny of Thoros, the governor of Edessa. Although Thoros also was an Armenian he was beholden to the Byzantines and was therefore resented by many Armenians who hated the Byzantines nearly as much as the Turks.

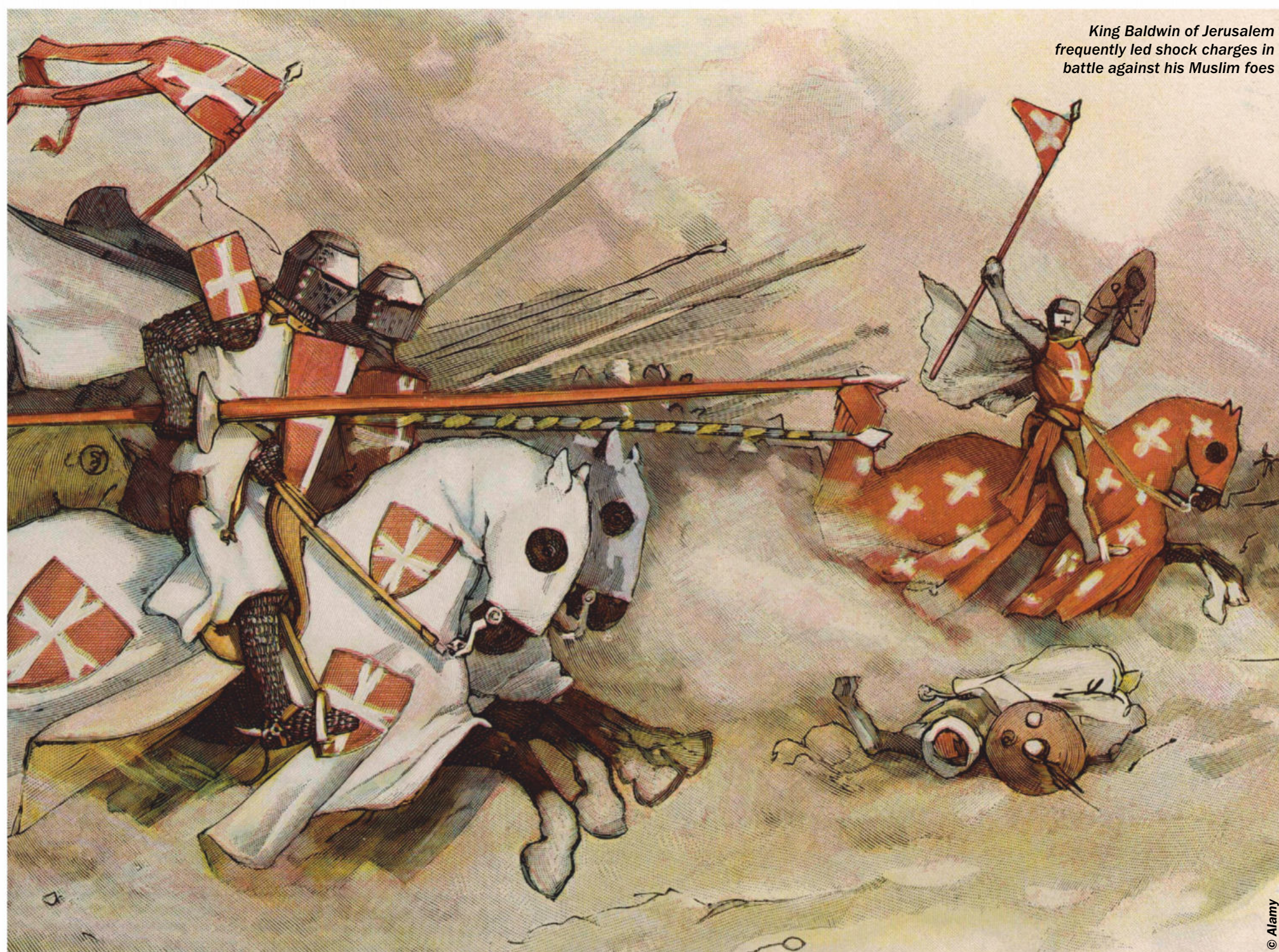
Baldwin departed on 17 October 1097 for the turbulent Upper Mesopotamian frontier in the hopes of enhancing his wealth and prestige. He took with him 100 men-at-arms. Over the next several months, Baldwin captured the Turkish-held strongholds of Ravendal and Turbessel. This gave him a secure foothold in the region.

When Baldwin arrived in Edessa on 20 February 1098, he was welcomed with open arms by the elderly Thoros. The ageing governor feared an imminent attack by Kerbogha, the powerful Seljuk governor of Mosul. Thoros adopted Baldwin as his son in a formal ceremony and he arranged for his new co-ruler to inherit the walled city upon his death. The townspeople overthrew Thoros and killed him in a revolt in early March. Baldwin had advance

*The coronation of Baldwin I on Christmas Day 1100*







King Baldwin of Jerusalem frequently led shock charges in battle against his Muslim foes

knowledge of the coup and deliberately refrained from intervening. The Armenians welcomed him as their new ruler.

Baldwin founded the first Frankish state in the Levant when he created the County of Edessa following Thoros's death. It was a stunning, albeit ruthless, achievement made possible by his boundless energy, cunning nature and astute leadership. When the senior commanders learned of Baldwin's achievement, they were deeply envious. With his territorial ambition satiated, Baldwin rushed provisions from his county to the crusaders at Antioch to help them defeat a relief army led by Kerbogha.

The crusader army captured Antioch in June 1098 and liberated Jerusalem in July 1099. The crusaders selected Godfrey as the first ruler of the new crusader state of Jerusalem. Believing that it was not appropriate to take a regal title, Godfrey gave himself the title of Defender of the Holy Sepulchre.

With just 300 knights and 2,000 infantry, the southernmost crusader state was little more than a patchwork of isolated outposts. Many of the key towns on the Levantine coast remained in the hands of local Muslim rulers beholden to either the Fatimid Caliph in Cairo or the Seljuk caliph in Baghdad. If Jerusalem were to survive and thrive, the Franks would have to control the coast to communicate and trade by sea with Western Europe.

## **“FOLLOWING HIS CORONATION, BALDWIN IMMEDIATELY EMBARKED ON A SERIES OF ATTACKS AGAINST MUSLIM-HELD PORTS TO SECURE THEM FOR HIS KINGDOM”**

### **Controlling the Church**

When Godfrey died in July 1100, a power vacuum existed. He had left no instructions for his succession. Baldwin had visited Jerusalem the previous December to fulfil his crusading vows, and therefore had a good handle on the local politics. Godfrey's supporters in Jerusalem urged Baldwin to take control of the city. Leaving Edessa in the hands of his cousin, Baldwin Le Bourcq, Baldwin departed for Jerusalem in November with an army of 200 mounted knights and 700 foot soldiers.

Baldwin was not the only one who coveted the crusader state of Jerusalem. Daimbert of Pisa, the wealthy new Patriarch of Jerusalem, wanted to make Jerusalem a church state as opposed to a secular state. Baldwin moved quickly against Daimbert. While Daimbert was

assisting his Italian ally Tancred in capturing Haifa in Galilee, Baldwin secured Jerusalem with his forces. When Daimbert returned, he begrudgingly agreed to Baldwin's request that the patriarch anoint and crown him as the first king of Jerusalem. Baldwin subsequently deposed Daimbert for embezzling funds earmarked for the defence of the realm.

Following his coronation, Baldwin immediately embarked on a series of attacks against Muslim-held ports to secure them for his kingdom. The Franks captured Arsuf and Caesarea in 1101. Arsuf surrendered without a fight; however, the Muslim garrison at Caesarea refused to capitulate. Assisted by a large Genoese fleet, Baldwin's Frankish army encircled the town, hammered it with their siege engines and carried it by storm. Because it had refused to surrender, Baldwin allowed his bloodthirsty troops to sack the city and slaughter its Muslim residents.

Acre fell to Baldwin three years later. Acre possessed a large, sheltered harbour. It soon became the trading capital of the kingdom. Unlike his heavy-handed tactics at Caesarea, Baldwin allowed the Muslims of Acre to remain in their homes provided they pay a poll tax.

### **War with Egypt**

During his first years in power Baldwin had to fend off multiple attacks by the Fatimid



*Baldwin of Boulogne liberates  
the Armenians of Edessa  
during the First Crusade*





*The Muslim cavalry of Syria and Mesopotamia posed a serious threat to Baldwin's small standing army*



Egyptians who had a forward base at Ascalon in southern Palestine. The Franks and Egyptians fought three battles at Ramla, a town midway between Ascalon and Jerusalem. In September 1101, Baldwin led 260 mounted knights and 900 foot soldiers against 3,000 Fatimid warriors at Ramla. The Egyptians mauled Baldwin's first two formations, but the king won the battle when he led his reserve in a devastating shock charge that smashed the Muslims.

The Second Battle of Ramla fought in May 1102 was a dark day for the Franks. Baldwin failed to comprehend the size of the enemy force on the eve of the clash. Rather than waiting for reinforcements from the Frankish garrisons on the Palestinian seaboard, he led 200 Jerusalem knights against a force that greatly outnumbered him. Although the crusaders made a valiant charge, they were repulsed with heavy losses. At that point, they raced for the safety of crusader-held Jaffa.

During the third year of his reign, before the last battle at Ramla, he received a grievous wound when his hunting party was overtaken by

## **“THE TURKISH CAVALRY OVERRAN BALDWIN’S CAMP AND CAPTURED HIS BANNER. IT WAS A HUMILIATING DEFEAT THAT TEMPORARILY TARNISHED HIS REPUTATION”**

Fatimid raiders. A Muslim horseman thrust his lance into the king's back. The wound plagued Baldwin for the rest of his days.

In the last pitched battle at Ramla fought in August 1105, Baldwin's crusader army faced a joint Egyptian-Syrian army. Realising that the Turkish contingent from Damascus with its horse archers posed the greatest threat to his army, Baldwin engaged and defeated it before turning his attention to the Egyptians. His sound management of the battle resulted in a Frankish victory.

### **Coalition builder**

Although Baldwin was heavily occupied defending his southern border against the Fatimids, he also organised coalitions to assist the other crusader states as needed. One of his greatest organisational feats occurred in 1109 when he and Tancred, his chief Christian rival in the Levant, reinforced Count Bertrand of Toulouse's siege of Tripoli, Lebanon. During the course of the campaign, Baldwin served as a self-appointed arbiter of disputes in a council of the Frankish rulers of the Levant. When the port fell to the Franks, he evenly divided the territorial spoils among Tancred, Bertrand, and Tancred's ally, William of Jordan. By assuming these tasks, Baldwin established a precedent whereby the ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem became the overlord of the Levant. In essence, the princes of the other crusader states (Edessa, Antioch, and Tripoli) were beholden to the King of Jerusalem. It was a brilliant move on his part. It allowed him to control events in the Outremer to his satisfaction.

The following year King Sigurd of Norway arrived on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Baldwin





King Baldwin of Jerusalem died while campaigning in Egypt in 1118



enlisted his help in capturing the port of Sidon in October 1110. Although Ascalon and Tyre remained in Muslim hands, Baldwin now controlled a half dozen anchorages on the Levantine littoral through which the Italian maritime republics could embark pilgrims, settlers, soldiers and conduct commerce.

### Threat from Mosul

But war clouds loomed on the horizon. A new Seljuk governor by the name of Maudud rose to power in Mosul in 1109. The Great Seljuk sultan in Baghdad instructed Maudud to retake Syria and Palestine from the Franks.

In 1110 Maudud besieged Edessa. Baldwin summoned the princes of the crusader states to march to the relief of the city. When the army arrived, Maudud raised his siege.

Three years later Maudud combined forces with Tughtigin, the Muslim governor of Damascus, and invaded Galilee at the head of a formidable Seljuk-Damascene army. Baldwin deployed his troops in a blocking position just south of the Sea of Galilee. Maudud launched a surprise attack on 28 June 1113

at al-Sannabra. The Turkish cavalry overran Baldwin's camp and captured his banner. It was a humiliating defeat that temporarily tarnished his reputation.

Baldwin regrouped, though. He took up a strong defensive position further west, which was bolstered by reinforcements from the crusader states of Tripoli and Antioch. When Maudud reconnoitred the Frankish position, he deemed it too strong to attack and withdrew.

An assassin of the Nizari Ismaili sect murdered Maudud in Damascus four months later. This reduced the immediate Seljuk threat to Baldwin's kingdom.

### Castle builder

Baldwin had long been interested in extending the southern frontier of the Kingdom of Jerusalem so that it might serve as a buffer against Muslim raiders.

He therefore ordered construction in 1115 of Montreal Castle, replete with curtain wall, towers, and barbicans, on a conical mountain four days' journey south of Jerusalem. The crusader garrison at Montreal Castle was

perfectly positioned to intercept the rich caravans travelling from Cairo to Damascus.

Baldwin succumbed to a serious illness as 1116 drew to a close. His old battle wound from Ramla opened up. After an extended convalescence, he undertook a large-scale raid into Fatimid Egypt in March 1118. After sacking Farama in the Nile Delta, he became deathly ill. During this time he commanded from a litter as he was too ill to ride. He died on 2 April at the village of Al-Arish on the way back to the Holy City. He was interred alongside Godfrey in Jerusalem.



### FURTHER READING

- ★ ASBRIDGE, THOMAS. *THE CRUSADES: AN AUTHORITATIVE HISTORY OF THE WAR FOR THE HOLY LAND* (HARPER COLLINS, 2010)
- ★ EDINGTON, SUSAN B. *BALDWIN I OF JERUSALEM, 1100-1118* (ROUTLEDGE: 2019)
- ★ TYERMAN, CHRISTOPHER. *GOD'S WAR: A NEW HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES* (BELKNAP, 2006)





## Heroes of the Medal of Honor

# RAUL PEREZ BENAVIDEZ

On 2 May 1968, this master sergeant rescued Special Forces and Montagnard soldiers surrounded by a North Vietnamese Army battalion operating in Cambodia, near Loc Ninh, South Vietnam

WORDS MICHAEL E. HASKEW

**T**he gunfire crackled so heavily that it sounded like popcorn, startling Staff Sergeant Roy Benavidez, who heard the frantic calls for help over the radio at the US Special Forces forward operating base in Loc Ninh, South Vietnam, near the border with Cambodia.

"Get us out of here! For God's sake, get us out!" came the cries for evacuation from a 12-man team of Fifth Special Forces Group Detachment B-56 inserted across the Cambodian frontier. Their mission had been to capture a North Vietnamese truck and drive it back to base as proof that Communist forces were using Cambodian territory as a covert means of supply and reinforcement to their troops in South Vietnam. Soon after deployment by helicopter, however, the team was in dire straits, surrounded by a North Vietnamese Army battalion, numbering perhaps 1,000 troops.

One rescue attempt had already failed, the helicopters driven away by intense enemy ground fire. Several members of the team were already dead and others were seriously wounded. The 240th Assault Helicopter Company was mounting another attempt, and Benavidez rushed to join the effort. As one chopper's mortally wounded 19-year-old door gunner slipped into his arms and died, Roy asked, "Who are those people on the ground?"

When the pilot shouted that Roy's friend Sergeant First Class Leroy Wright and his detachment were the ones under fire, Roy



yelled, "I'm coming with you!" Three days earlier Benavidez had been involved in a similar mission and owed Wright a tremendous debt. As Roy and another soldier were descending by rope, the two lines became entangled. The friction threatened to snap the lines. From the hovering helicopter, Wright descended on another rope, freed the tangled lines and probably saved the lives of Benavidez and the other soldier.

Now, every second counted, and Roy climbed aboard the helicopter with only a medical kit and his Bowie knife. This day, 2 May 1968, would be life-changing, and after surviving a harrowing ordeal that he called "six hours in hell" Benavidez was hailed a hero, eventually receiving a long overdue Congressional Medal of Honor.

Without hesitating to risk his own life, Benavidez was no stranger to hardship. This was his second tour in Vietnam. One of the first 125,000 American soldiers deployed to Southeast Asia in October 1964, he served as an advisor to the South Vietnamese military and stepped on a mine while on patrol. Grievously wounded, he was evacuated to the Philippines and then transferred to Brooke Army Hospital at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where doctors pronounced that he would never walk again. Benavidez, however, thought differently.

*Left: Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez was wounded 37 times while rescuing trapped comrades in Cambodia*



SEALs abseiling from a UH-1  
Huey in Vietnam, 1967

“THE REAL HEROES ARE THE ONES WHO  
GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR COUNTRY. I  
DON’T LIKE TO BE CALLED A HERO. I JUST  
DID WHAT I WAS TRAINED TO DO”

Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez

Special Forces Captain  
Vernon Gillespie Jr. at a  
firing range in Vietnam

Image: Getty

Image: Alamy



**“IF THE STORY OF HIS  
HEROISM WERE A MOVIE  
SCRIPT, YOU WOULD NOT  
BELIEVE IT”**

**President Ronald Reagan**

*The US Navy named the transport ship  
USNS Benavidez in recognition of the  
Medal of Honor recipient*



Image: Alamy



Image: Alamy

Slipping from his bed night after night, he crawled painfully to a nearby wall, gritted his teeth and steadily worked bone and muscle until he walked out of the hospital in July 1966.

By the time he was wounded, Roy was already a veteran and hardened by his experiences on and off the battlefield. Born in the small town of Lindenau in South Texas, he was orphaned at the age of eight along with his younger brother. He dropped out of school at 15 to help support the extended family that had taken them in. After shining shoes in the local bus station, working in a tyre store, and labouring as a farmhand, he joined the Texas National Guard in 1952 at the height of the Korean War. Three years later he opted for active duty. Then the promise of additional pay enticed him to volunteer for airborne training, which he completed in 1959. Subsequently, he joined the Special Forces, the Green Berets, becoming a linguist and interrogator trained in light and heavy weapons and cross-trained as a medic. After recovering from his wounds, he was assigned to Central America but volunteered for a second tour in Vie.

That terrible day in Cambodia, Benavidez applied his extensive training and an unwavering will to survive. Attending prayer

services at 1.30pm, his quiet contemplation was shattered with the distress call. As the Bell UH-1 Iroquois helicopter, affectionately nicknamed ‘Huey’, left Loc Ninh, he knew that Wright, Staff Sergeant Lloyd ‘Frenchie’ Mousseau, Specialist 4 Brian O’Connor and their native Montagnard mates were in serious trouble. Minutes later, Benavidez rode the Huey literally into the jaws of death.

The landing zone (LZ) was hot with enemy fire and the Huey could not land. As it hovered ten feet above the ground, Benavidez leaped out and began running toward the surrounded soldiers. As soon as he left the chopper, a round from an enemy AK-47 assault rifle slammed into his right leg. He fell in a heap but got up and continued the 75 yards to the cover of brush and trees where his comrades were hanging on grimly. As he rose to his feet, the concussion of a grenade hammered his entire body. Shrapnel ripped into his face and neck. Undeterred, he kept moving forward.

When he finally reached the trapped men, Roy distributed water and ammunition, repositioning them to fire effectively. He quickly saw that four men were already dead, among them his friend Wright. The other eight were wounded, and it was clear that they could not hold on

much longer. He called in air strikes to keep the North Vietnamese at bay, and while he was on the radio using his call sign, Tango Mike Mike, another bullet tore into his right thigh. Wracked with pain and bleeding profusely, he called for another Huey to attempt an evacuation.

With the helicopter’s approach, Benavidez picked up an AK-47 lying on the ground and began firing as he dragged half the wounded men toward the open door. As the chopper lifted slightly to move closer to the remaining casualties, he ran beneath it, firing all the while. He grabbed a bag containing classified documents, codes and call signs, from around Wright’s neck and took another bullet, this one in the abdomen. A second grenade blast sent searing shrapnel into his back. Almost simultaneously, the helicopter pilot was shot dead, and the Huey crashed. Roy made his way to the wreckage and pulled each of the wounded men out.

One of the wounded men asked, “Are you hurt bad, Sarge?” Benavidez responded, “Hell no! I’ve been hit so many times I don’t give a damn no more!”

As he continued to call in air strikes, their ordnance exploding dangerously close to the small group of wounded soldiers, Benavidez





*Prior to receiving the Medal of Honor in 1981, Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez walks into the Pentagon with President Ronald Reagan*

realised that time was running out. Despite the air support, the enemy was closing in. Another helicopter landed and he saw his last opportunity. Placing a mortally wounded Mousseau over his shoulder, he stepped toward the Huey. Suddenly, an enemy soldier charged, swinging his rifle butt into Roy's face and breaking his jaw, then drawing back to thrust his bayonet into Roy's right hand. Roy grabbed the end of the rifle, pulled out his Bowie knife with his left hand, and stabbed the enemy soldier to death while sustaining another wound to his left forearm.

Benavidez gunned down two more North Vietnamese soldiers charging the helicopter from an angle obscuring the door gunner's field of vision. He continued to drag the wounded and dead to the helicopter, making a final desperate return to the former position to ensure that the evacuation was complete.

When he was finally pulled aboard the Huey, Benavidez had sustained 37 bullet, bayonet, and shrapnel wounds. He was covered in blood and his eyes and mouth were nearly sealed shut.

By the time the chopper returned to Loc Ninh, Roy Benavidez appeared dead. Attendants began zipping him into a body bag,

but a friend noticed a flicker of life and shouted, "That's Benavidez, get a doc!" When the doctor arrived, he determined that the wounded sergeant was beyond help. "There's nothing I can do for him," he said. Benavidez mustered all his strength and managed to spit in the doctor's face. Then, the doctor said, "He won't make it, but we'll try."

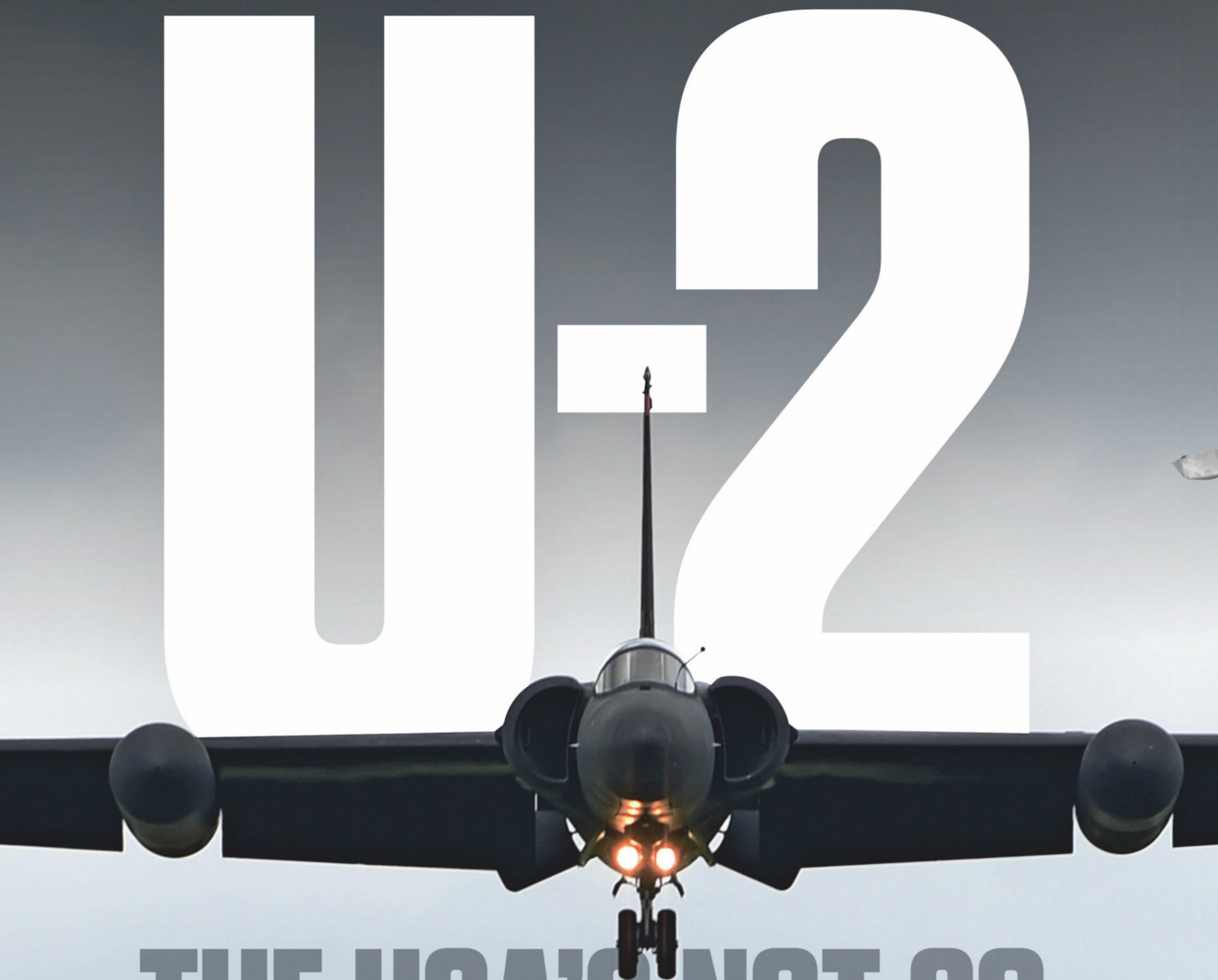
Benavidez did make it. Defying the odds, he was again transported to Brooke Army Hospital. His heroism was recognised as extraordinary, but it was feared that he would die before the process of confirming a Medal of Honor award could be completed. An eyewitness account was necessary, and it was believed that all those who had seen Roy's courage that day had died. Instead, he received the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) from Army Chief of Staff General William Westmoreland in September 1968.

After nearly a year in the hospital, Benavidez recovered from his wounds and returned to active duty, serving at Fort Riley, Kansas, and Fort Sam Houston until his retirement in 1976 with the rank of master sergeant. Meanwhile, as more details of his heroism emerged, Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel Ralph R. Drake championed the effort to upgrade his DSC to the Medal of Honor.

The process was stymied for several years. However, Brian O'Connor, a survivor of the Special Forces team that Benavidez fought to save, stepped forward. Long believed dead, O'Connor was living in Fiji in 1980, when a wire service article on Benavidez was picked up by an Australian newspaper. O'Connor read the story and then produced a ten-page account of the dreadful day, satisfying the requirement for eyewitness corroboration. On the strength of O'Connor's report, the upgrade was swift, and President Ronald Reagan presented the Medal of Honor to Benavidez during a ceremony at the Pentagon on 24 February 1981.

Roy Benavidez devoted his post-military years to the youth of America, speaking to groups of young people on citizenship and patriotism and encouraging them to stay in school. He spoke forcefully against government attempts to eliminate benefits for thousands of veterans and prevailed. He died on 29 November 1998 of respiratory failure and complications from diabetes. His body was interred at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery and his Medal of Honor is on display at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California.





# THE USA'S NOT SO SECRET SPY PLANE

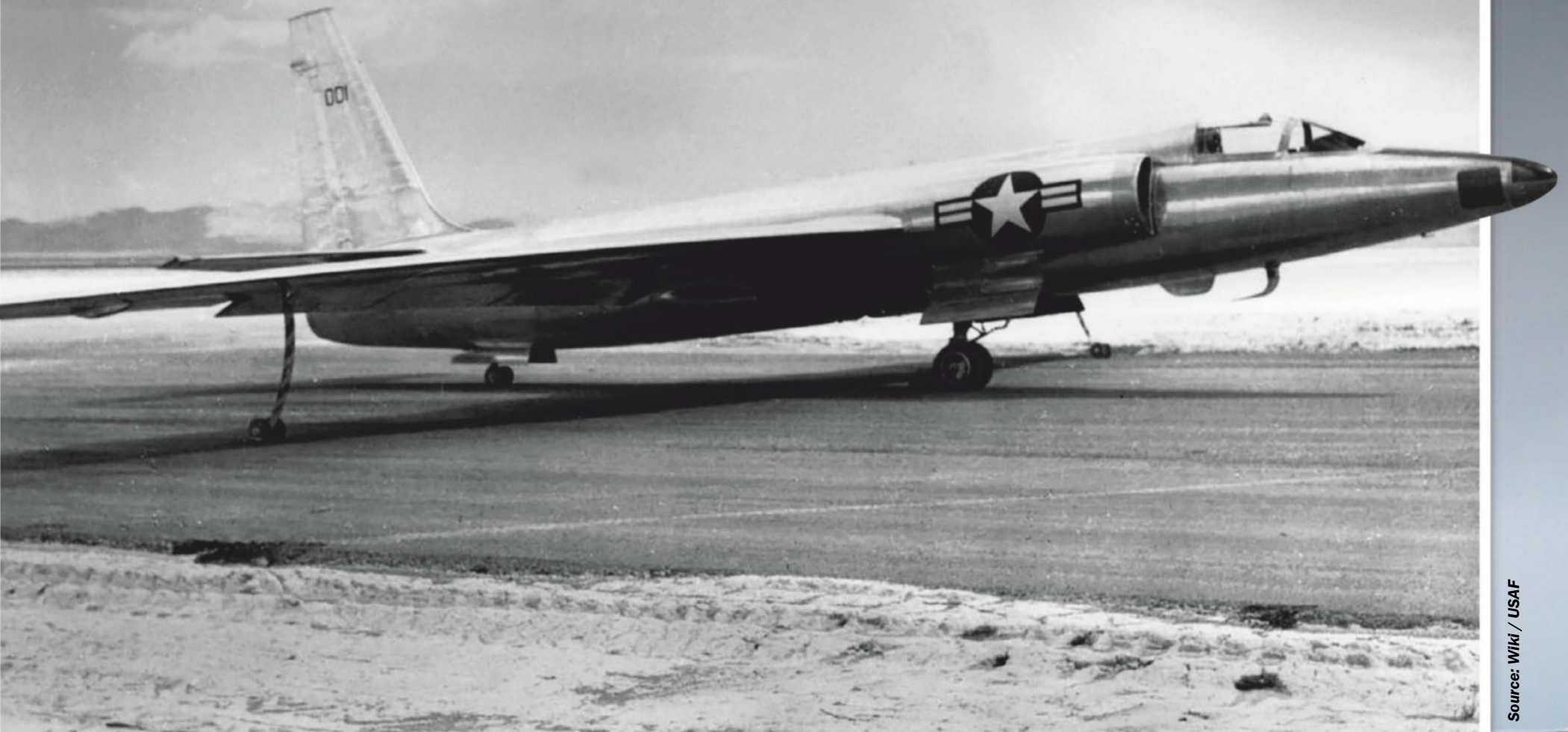
As the Cold War gathered momentum, America faced a critical intelligence shortfall – it simply did not know what military capability the Russians had. The U-2 was designed to answer that question

WORDS DAVID SMITH



*The U-2 was so secret that the unnamed aircraft was called simply 'the Article'. Article 001, the first U-2, flew for the first time on 4 August 1955*

**"THE BASE WHERE TESTING OF THE NEW PLANE WOULD TAKE PLACE WAS KNOWN AS WATERTOWN, BUT BOTH THE BASE AND THE PLANE ITSELF WOULD SOON HAVE NEW IDENTITIES. WATERTOWN BECAME AREA 51. THE CL-282 BECAME THE U-2"**



Source: Wiki / USAF



Source: Wiki / USAF

As soon as World War II ended, the United States was faced with a major problem. Its wartime ally, the Soviet Union, was clearly poised to become its chief adversary in the post-war years. The strength of the Russians was frightening enough. Equally concerning was the fact that very little was known about what was going on behind the 'iron curtain'.

Traditional spies could only be relied upon so far. America needed to have a clearer and far more comprehensive understanding of what the Soviets were up to, and the longer this need went unmet, the more fanciful the nightmares the American military community would dream up. The belief that a 'bomber gap' existed, which would later be repeated in the fears over a 'missile gap', produced a state of near crisis in the American intelligence community. They feared they were falling behind in the development of new weapons, especially in nuclear-capable systems, but they were almost completely in the dark as to what was really going on.

By the end of the 1940s, the CIA was formed, along with the National Security Council, the Department of Defense and the

United States Air Force Security Service. America was getting serious about answering its most pressing questions: what did the Russians have, and where was it?

### **The thirst for knowledge**

The solution was tantalisingly close by the mid 1950s. Satellite technology was advancing rapidly and it was clear that this would eventually provide an easy method of observing events at any point on the globe. The problem was, satellite imagery was not expected to be ready to fulfil the need for at least another decade. A stop-gap measure was required.

Aerial reconnaissance was nothing new, and had been used successfully during the two World Wars. Now, however, there was a need for a new platform from which to gain the vital intelligence data. The United States simply could not produce a coherent strategic strategy without knowing what the Russians had and where their assets were based.

Data could be gathered in two ways. It was legal to fly close to another nation's borders in peacetime, so information on border defences was easy to amass. It was, however, illegal to violate a nation's airspace in peacetime. Flying

over Russia was unavoidable, so the Americans had to find a way of doing it without getting caught. The answer was altitude. If a plane could fly high enough, then Russian radar would not be able to detect it and it would be able to operate freely, without any damaging diplomatic fallout.

America therefore began to develop a series of high-altitude planes with which to gather intelligence not only on the Soviets, but on any nation it chose to.

The specifications for such a plane were extreme. An operating altitude of 65,000 feet was considered essential, and this ceiling would increase as the Soviets countered with improved radar capabilities and better fighter jets.

The first high-altitude plane to be employed was a modified Canberra, the RB-57D, which could fly at 70,000 feet. At the same time as this plane was being prepared to begin operations, however, the call went out for an aircraft of even greater sophistication. Three companies were given a list of specifications and told to come up with a new plane, quickly – it would be needed by July 1956.

Communism was making strides around the world and fears of Soviet aggression were growing. Russia was believed to have hundreds



# FLYING HIGH

Altitude was to be the U-2's only defence against anti-aircraft defences and its designers pulled out all the stops

The U-2 is a masterpiece of design, with every possible trick and technique employed to help it get to its prodigious operating altitude.

To start with, the plane is in essence a glider that just happens to have jet propulsion built in. The massive wingspan (103 feet) gives the aircraft the appearance of an albatross, and also generates vast amounts of lift. The glide ratio (the distance covered for each unit of altitude lost when power is removed) is 23:1. This means that, theoretically, a U-2 losing engine power at an altitude of 13 miles could glide for 299 miles before needing to land.

To achieve these aerodynamic qualities, the designers of the U-2 had to cut the plane down to its bones. As a rule of thumb, every extra pound of weight translates to a reduction in altitude of one foot. Such niceties as weaponry were quickly discounted, and even normal landing gear was considered too heavy. The plane had to make do with a flimsy set of wheels and each time the U-2 returned to earth after a mission, the pilot basically pulled off a controlled crash-landing.

The reductions in weight had both good and bad consequences. The plane could climb at an incredible 15,000 feet per minute. Its flight capabilities were so impressive that

when efforts were made to convert it for operation off an aircraft carrier, it stunned onlookers by lifting off just a third of the way down the carrier's deck. By the time it cleared the end of the carrier, it was already 1,000 feet up.

This impatience to get into the air works against the U-2's pilot when it comes to landing. The U-2 is notoriously reluctant to return to earth, and anything less than perfection in the approach to a runway can see the plane bounce back up into the sky, forcing the pilot to go round and try again.

The U-2 is also not exactly rugged. In fact, if flown either too quickly, or too slowly, disaster can strike. If moving through the air too slowly, the plane will stall and would be unable to withstand the forces created when it fell into a spiral. If flown too fast, vibration could shake the plane to pieces.

Making this situation worse is the way high altitudes constrict the airspeed 'sweet spot', within which safe flying is possible. At extreme altitudes of 70,000 feet and higher, the safe zone between flying too fast and flying too slow can narrow to as little as five knots.

The U-2 is therefore an inherently dangerous plane to fly. Of the original 20 ordered, 16 would break up in flight, with ten pilots losing their lives.



Source: Wiki / USAF

Above: A look into the cockpit of the modern U-2, taken in 2006. Note the astronaut-style flight suit of the pilot



A U-2 undergoes trials for use as a carrier-launched aircraft, on the deck of the USS America

Source: Wiki / US Navy

**"THEORETICALLY, A U-2 LOSING ENGINE POWER AT AN ALTITUDE OF 13 MILES COULD GLIDE FOR 299 MILES BEFORE NEEDING TO LAND"**

Source: Wiki / Christopher Michel

Taken aboard a U-2 spy plane at an altitude of 70,000 ft (21,000 m)



of the new M-4 strategic bomber and the USAF was pressing hard for a massive increase in its B-52 force. Intelligence was essential.

Surprisingly, considering the secretive nature of the programme, a fourth company heard about the request put out by the US Government. Lockheed believed that its XF-104 fighter was a promising starting point, so the company threw its hat into the ring in the form of the CL-282, essentially an XF-104 with an increased wingspan and a shorter fuselage.

The initial response was tepid. General Curtis B. LeMay commented that he was "not interested in an aircraft without wheels or guns" (many sacrifices had been made to make the experimental plane as light as possible), but the CIA was intrigued. In 1954, a contract was issued to Lockheed to produce 20 of the new planes under a joint CIA/USAF project.

The base where testing of the new plane would take place was known as Watertown, but both the base and the plane itself would soon have new identities. Watertown became Area 51. The CL-282 became the U-2.

## Altitude problems

The U-2 was originally intended to have a service life of just a few years. If rushed into operation quickly enough, it was anticipated it would have two years before Soviet air defences caught up with it. That would be enough to get a snapshot of Russian capabilities and allow the Americans to

plan their response based on data rather than fevered conjecture.

The U-2 was not fast, flying at just 500mph. It was also extremely flimsy, as so much had been sacrificed to cut down weight, but its trump card was the altitude at which it could fly. It could reach 72,500 feet – an incredible 13 miles. This altitude not only gave a view of 250 miles in all directions, it also presented serious challenges for both the pilot and the camera that would need to provide useful photographs from such an extreme height.

The cabin of the U-2 was pressurised, but only to the equivalent of 35,000 feet. Mission times as long as nine hours were envisaged, and operating at that altitude, for that length of time, made the pilots susceptible to exactly the same problems faced by deep-sea divers. Simply put, the pilot of a U-2 could suffer from the bends.

In order to limit the severity of this, pilots would breathe pure oxygen prior to their mission in order to reduce the amount of nitrogen in their bloodstream (expanding nitrogen was the cause of the severe pains associated with the bends). Despite this, most pilots suffered to some degree from decompression sickness, and missions occasionally had to be cancelled.

The camera itself was an extraordinary design, producing a negative 18 inches square. Co-created by designer Jim Baker and Polaroid expert Edward Land, it could take 4,000 images on a mission and could identify objects less than a metre across from an altitude of 13 miles. Testing produced hugely impressive results and, slightly ahead of schedule, the U-2 was ready to begin operations in June 1956.

The first two flights, over Eastern Bloc nations, were successful, but there was also cause for grave concern. Despite assurances from the intelligence community that the

aeroplane was essentially invisible, it proved to be nothing of the sort. Soviet-built radar detected the first two flights. America's top-secret spy plane was not a secret at all.

## Caution vs curiosity

President Dwight D. Eisenhower was now faced with a major dilemma. He had at his disposal a plane that could give his military and intelligence communities all the information they could handle on Soviet capabilities. But the Soviets were aware of it.

The decision came down to the distinction between 'detecting' and 'tracking'. The President decided that he could accept the Soviets being aware of the U-2. A cover story could be concocted to reassure the American public that they were doing nothing wrong. But tracking was a different matter. If a plane could be tracked, it could potentially be shot down and that would be a diplomatic nightmare involving a huge loss of face in the international community and a loss of confidence for the public at home.

Reassured that the Russians couldn't actually track the U-2, Eisenhower gave authorisation for ten overflights of the Soviet Union, beginning on 4 July 1956. Halfway through the programme, however, it became clear that the Russians were not only detecting the flights, they were tracking them as well. Strident protests were made by the Soviets, who were unimpressed by the claims that this was a plane gathering weather data (the story was primarily aimed at mollifying the American public at any rate) and the overflights were suspended. Despite this, the five missions that had been completed proved immensely successful. The so-called 'bomber gap' was proved to be a myth and America did not have to commit to an expensive bomber construction programme.

**Below:** A Lockheed XF-104 Starfighter – starting point for the U-2

**Right:** Gary Powers (right) pictured in front of a U-2 with one of the plane's designers, Kelly Johnson

**Below, right:** An example of the quality of image possible from the U-2's onboard cameras, detailing Soviet missile installations on Cuba



Source: Wiki / USAF

Source: Wiki / USAF

Source: Wiki / USAF





# DRAMA OVER CUBA

When the Russians attempted to place nuclear missiles on Cuba, the U-2 was in the front line of America's response

The U-2's finest hour came during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Cuba had been an object of interest for the States ever since the revolution, led by Fidel Castro, in the 1950s. When America was planning for its disastrous Bay of Pigs Invasion, which took place in April 1961, U-2 planes provided valuable intelligence on the island's defences.

The stakes were raised in October 1962 when the Soviets set up missile facilities on the island, partly to counter the American Jupiter missiles based in Turkey and Italy.

U-2 flights over Cuba provided evidence of a steady escalation in the Russian military presence on the island. To begin with, these were limited to fighter jets and anti-aircraft installations, but on 29 August 1962, a U-2 piloted by Bob Erickson discovered SAM sites for SA-2 missiles – the same type that had shot down Gary Powers two years earlier.

Satellite surveillance was by now available, but weather conditions were a problem at the time of day a satellite could pass over Cuba, so the U-2 continued to provide vital intelligence. On 14 October, medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) sites were photographed at San Cristobel.

Less than two weeks later, however, a U-2 piloted by Major Rudolf Anderson was shot down over Cuba. Unlike Powers, Anderson was unable to escape and was awarded his Distinguished Service Medal posthumously.

Despite the loss of Anderson, the hard evidence provided by U-2 overflights of Cuba allowed President John F. Kennedy to justify the hard-line stance he took with the Soviets, staring down Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and forcing the Russians to abandon their plans for a missile base on Cuba.

The wreckage of Rudolf Anderson's U-2 after it was shot down over Cuba



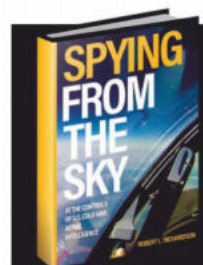
The following years would see the balance tip between caution and curiosity. Fears of a missile gap grew and the president repeatedly had to weigh up the benefits of overflights with the potential drawbacks.

For the most part, caution won out. Only 22 flights over the Soviet Union had been authorised by April 1960. The two-year window of safety assumed for the U-2 had long since closed, when two more overflights were authorised, for 9 April and 1 May.

The April flight, the 23rd overflight of Russia, was a huge success. On the next, the U-2's luck finally ran out.

Gary Powers had flown 27 successful U-2 missions when he took off from Peshawar in India, on 1 May 1960. The identification of Soviet ICBM sites was the primary goal of his nine-hour mission. The Americans were taking a calculated risk: detection was certain, the possibility of being tracked was considered to be very high and interception was a real possibility.

Halfway through the flight, a Soviet SA-2 surface-to-air missile blew off the tail of Powers's U-2. He somehow survived a 12-mile parachute drop and was captured alive.



America's aerial intelligence programme, including the development of the U-2, is the subject of a new book from Casemate. *Spying From The Sky*, by Robert L. Richardson, will be published in April 2020.

America's nightmare had come true. Powers would spend two years in a Russian prison before being exchanged for a Soviet spy, and the U-2 never flew over Russia again.

### Flying on

The plane, however, remained useful. Though its primary purpose had been removed, it continued to provide vital intelligence data from all over the globe. Cuba, Vietnam, Venezuela, India – the list of trouble spots overflown by the U-2 steadily mounted. In time, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria would be added to the list, because the U-2 far outstripped its original four-year life expectancy and is still operational today in an updated form.

Remarkably, the U-2 has even outlasted its own replacement. The SR-71 Blackbird could operate at 85,000 feet and added speed to its arsenal, reaching 2,000 mph, but it has long been retired from service while U-2 flights continue.

If anything, the plane is too effective. On a single mission it can generate a roll of film two miles long. It is simply too much for human analysis and only an estimated five per cent of the 'take' from each mission is carefully examined. Experiments are underway to see if artificial intelligence can be employed to examine more of the film and identify areas worth looking into more closely.

Although the satellite surveillance technology being dreamed of in the 1950s is now a reality, the remarkable U-2 flies on – but today, nobody is under the illusion that it is in any way secret.



# NOW THIS IS SPARTA!

Hailed as the city-state that birthed antiquity's most fearsome fighters, Sparta inspired more than just fear, leaving behind a legacy of governance, architecture and military techniques that would shape the ancient world



Ordering is easy. Go online at:  
**[www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk)**  
Or get it from selected supermarkets & newsagents



# TYPE 95 HA-GO

WORDS CRAIG MOORE

The small Japanese Army Type 95 Ha-Go light tank was cutting-edge technology in 1939, but it soon became outdated

## IDEAL JUNGLE TANK

The Ha-Go tank was only 2.06m (6ft 9in) wide. It could negotiate narrow jungle tracks and the back streets of Asian cities with ease. It only weighed 7.4 tons and could cross most weak bridges, unlike heavier Allied tanks.

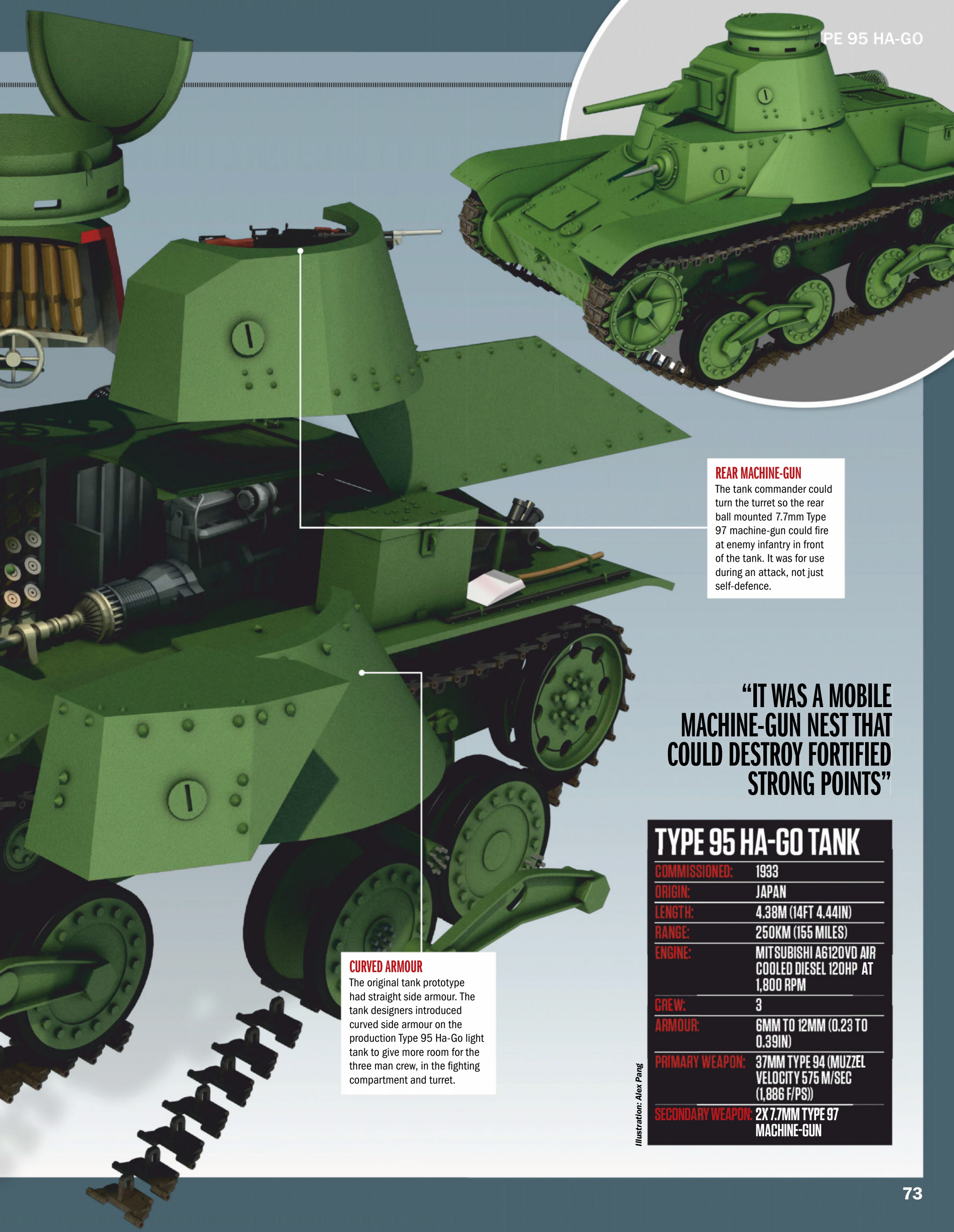
Many people dismiss the Japanese Type 95 Ha-Go as an under-gunned and poorly armoured tank that was no match against the Allies' Matilda II, M3 Grant and M4 Sherman tanks. What they are failing to do is put this tank in its correct historical context. By 1939 around 279 had been built. Its 37mm main gun and 12mm thick frontal armour was comparable to the German Panzer III Ausf.A-D tanks used in the invasion of Poland in September 1939.

The Type 95 Ha-Go's primary role was not to attack enemy tanks. It was designed to provide support for the infantry. It was a mobile machine-gun nest that could destroy fortified strong points by firing high-explosive shells from its main gun. The tank's armour was thick enough to protect the crew from small arms fire and lethal artillery shell or mortar rocket fragments. The tank was able to get close to areas of resistance and put down covering fire while Japanese soldiers could advance and capture military objectives. Its small size enabled it to travel along jungle roads. At only 7.4 tons it was relatively light and could cross most bridges in Asia safely.

## SIMPLE SUSPENSION SYSTEM

The Ha-Go tank was fitted with two bell crank scissor system paired bogie wheels on each side. If damaged, these could easily be replaced. The drive sprocket for the track was fitted at the front of the tank.



**REAR MACHINE-GUN**

The tank commander could turn the turret so the rear ball mounted 7.7mm Type 97 machine-gun could fire at enemy infantry in front of the tank. It was for use during an attack, not just self-defence.

**“IT WAS A MOBILE  
MACHINE-GUN NEST THAT  
COULD DESTROY FORTIFIED  
STRONG POINTS”**

**CURVED ARMOUR**

The original tank prototype had straight side armour. The tank designers introduced curved side armour on the production Type 95 Ha-Go light tank to give more room for the three man crew, in the fighting compartment and turret.

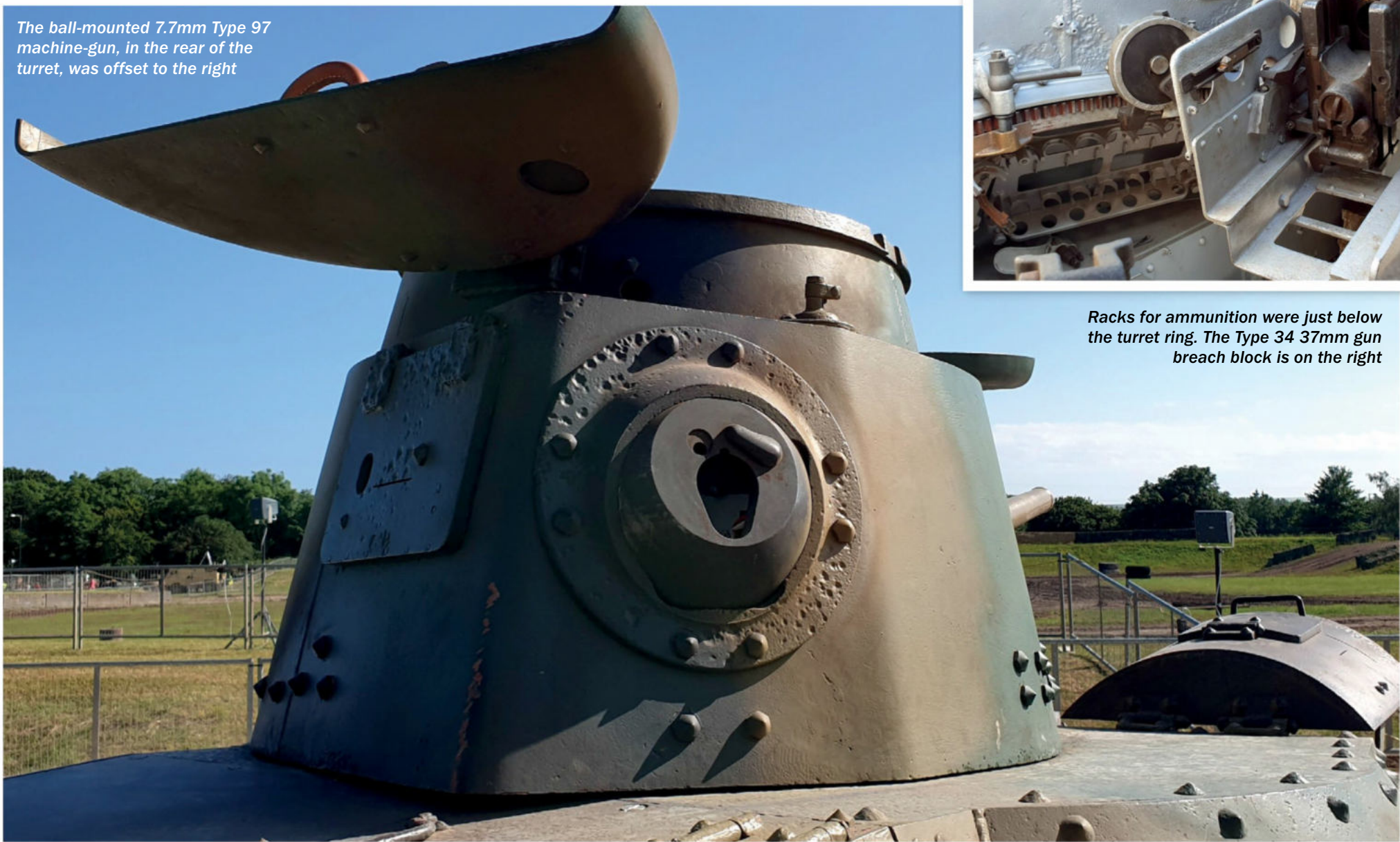
**TYPE 95 HA-GO TANK**

<b>COMMISSIONED:</b>	1933
<b>ORIGIN:</b>	JAPAN
<b>LENGTH:</b>	4.38M (14FT 4.44IN)
<b>RANGE:</b>	250KM (155 MILES)
<b>ENGINE:</b>	MITSUBISHI A6120VD AIR COOLED DIESEL 120HP AT 1,800 RPM
<b>CREW:</b>	3
<b>ARMOUR:</b>	6MM TO 12MM (0.23 TO 0.39IN)
<b>PRIMARY WEAPON:</b>	37MM TYPE 94 (MUZZEL VELOCITY 575 M/SEC (1,886 F/PS))
<b>SECONDARY WEAPON:</b>	2X 7.7MM TYPE 97 MACHINE-GUN

Illustration: Alex Pang



*The ball-mounted 7.7mm Type 97 machine-gun, in the rear of the turret, was offset to the right*

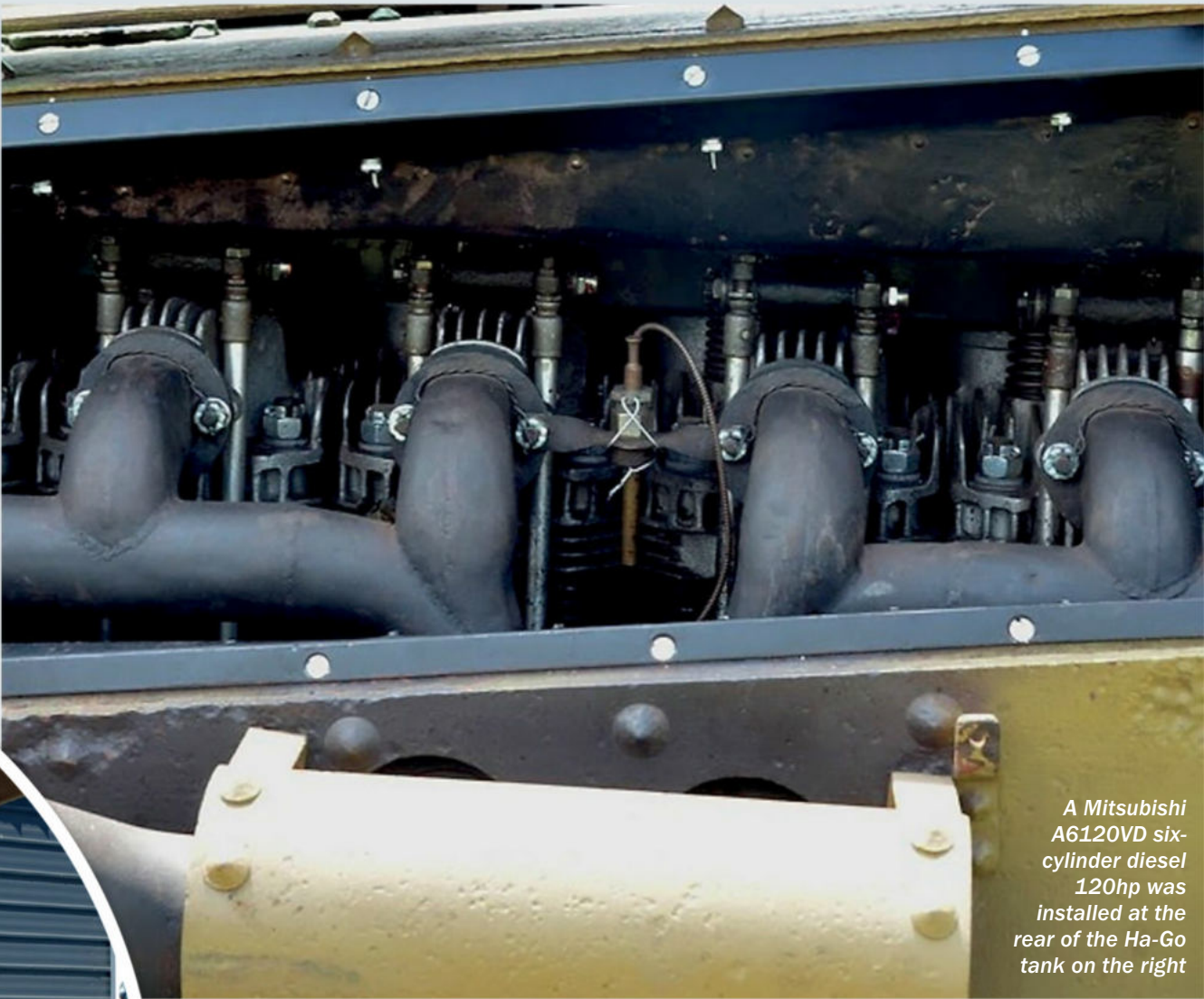


*Racks for ammunition were just below the turret ring. The Type 34 37mm gun breach block is on the right*

## ARMAMENT

The main gun was a Type 34 37mm tank gun. It could fire armour-piercing rounds as well as high-explosive fragmentation shells. The commander held the weapon like a huge rifle. His shoulder would be pressed into the stock to brace it. His right hand held the grip and trigger while peering through the gun sight. The ball-mounted 7.7mm Type 97 machine-gun, in the rear of the turret, was offset to the right, another was installed in the front of the hull.

*A Type 34 37mm gun was mounted in the turret and a 7.7mm machine-gun in the hull*



*A Mitsubishi A6120VD six-cylinder diesel 120hp was installed at the rear of the Ha-Go tank on the right*

## ENGINE

The Japanese preferred diesel engines over petrol following a trial of a Vickers six-ton E tank in the 1930s. The petrol engine caught fire and the crew were burnt to death. The Ha-Go tank was powered by a Mitsubishi A6120VD six-cylinder diesel 120hp engine which was installed at the rear of the tank. The exhaust jutted out from the right of the engine bay, bent at a 90 degrees, and then attached to the right rear mud guard. It had a top road speed of 45km/h (28mph).



**“THE PETROL ENGINE  
CAUGHT FIRE AND  
THE CREW WERE  
BURNT TO DEATH”**

*Japanese Type 95 Ha-Go light tank halted  
by Australian anti-tank fire in Malaya*

Source: Wiki/AWM 011298

## DESIGN

Mitsubishi started design work on the Ha-Go in 1933. After successful cold weather prototype trials in Manchuria, mass production commenced in 1938. By 1943 around 2,300 had been built. The hull and turret sides were angled and rounded to increase the amount of room in the crew compartment. The driver's hatch was bowed and could fold up for better vision. When in combat the hatch was closed and he could see through vision slits and a small square hatch. The hull machine-gunner had to use the turret hatch.

Images: Wiki/Craig Moore

*The rounded superstructure side armour  
gave the crew more room.*







Left: A US Marine giving water to a kitten next to a knocked-out, turret-less Ha-Go tank on Tarawa, an atoll in the Pacific

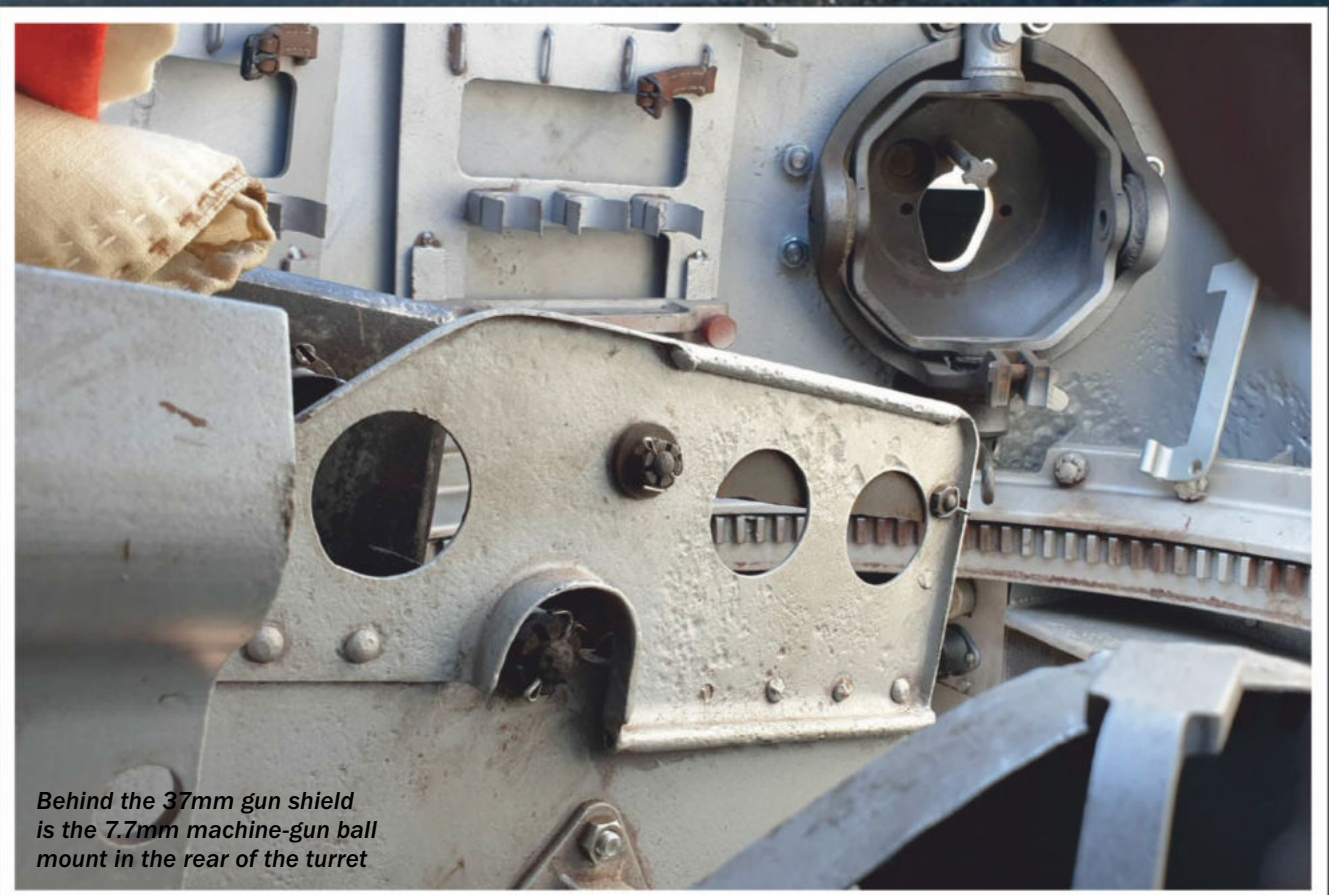
Source: Wiki/USNA 74253937



Ha-Go tank driver's instrument panel with oil pressure gauge, starter switch, engine speedometer, tachometer and panel light (rebuilt)

## INTERIOR

The tank commander sat in the turret and was over worked. He could not command and fight the tank at the same time efficiently. He had to give instructions to his driver, communicate with other tanks and the infantry, while looking out for targets and threats. He was also the loader and gunner for the 37mm main gun, as well as the ball-mounted 7.7mm machine-gun in the rear of the turret. The driver sat on the right of the tank next to the hull machine-gunner.



Behind the 37mm gun shield is the 7.7mm machine-gun ball mount in the rear of the turret



# SERVICE HISTORY

Ha-Go tanks were deployed to all Japanese battlefronts. Their small size made them ideal for navigating through jungle tracks and city back streets. The Ha-Go would see combat in the humid jungles of Burma and the Dutch East-Indies, the cold winters in Northern China and in the hot sunbaked Pacific Islands. They would be in service until the end of the war. The Dutch and the British initially used inferior armoured cars and machine-gun armed tanks like the Vickers Mk.VI and Marmon-Harrington CTLS-4TA, to try and stop the Japanese invasion. There were too few of them and they were no match for the Type 95 Ha-Go. By 1943 the situation changed. The Allies equipped their armies in the Far East with heavily armed tanks that had thick armour. They started the process of retaking occupied countries and islands. On 9 August 1945 they had to face Soviet tanks in Manchuria.

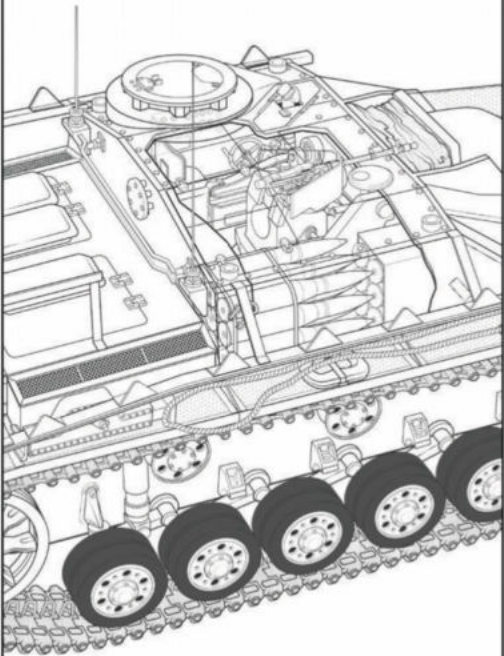
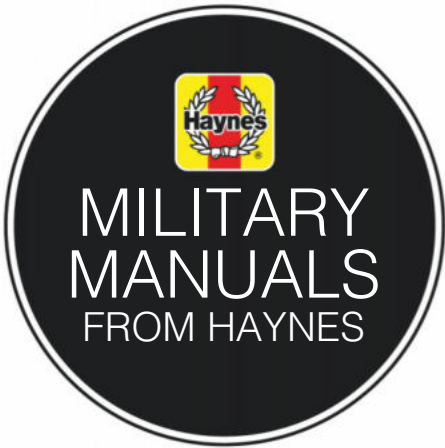


This drivable, rebuilt Type 95 Ha-Go light tank is owned by the Defence Technology Museum, Gotemba, Japan

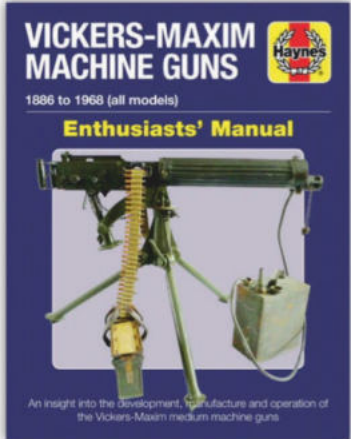
US Marines examine a Japanese Type 95 Ha-Go light tank on Tarawa, an atoll in the Pacific Ocean



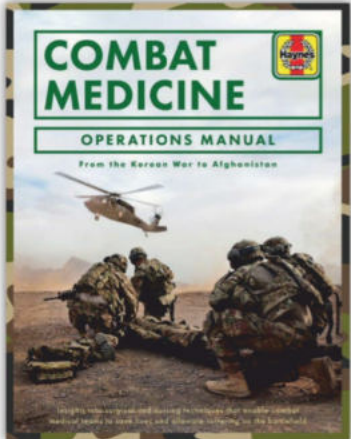
Source: Wiki/USNA 74241443)



RRP £25.00



RRP £25.00



RRP £25.00

AVAILABLE AT  
HAYNES.COM/MILITARY  
AND ALL GOOD  
BOOKSHOPS





# CHURCHILL'S BOER COMMANDOS

Uncovering the lost SAS origin story and Operation Colossus, WWII's forgotten raid

WORDS DAMIEN LEWIS

*Far from prying eyes, at Loch Fyne, on the rugged west coast of Scotland, 120 men of C Company, of the 2nd parachute Battalion, began training for the mission, codenamed Operation Biting*

**O**n 4 June 1940, even as the smoke of defeat still hung thick over the Dunkirk beaches, Churchill delivered a stirring speech to parliament, hailing the rescuing of so many "... out of the jaws of death and shame, to their native land". But tellingly he added, "We must be very careful not to assign to this deliverance the attributes of a victory. Wars are not won by evacuation."

One man with whom those words struck a powerful chord was Lieutenant-Colonel Dudley Wrangel Clarke. Known as a maverick free-thinker, Clarke had been noticed when General Archibald Wavell had recognised his "unorthodox outlook on soldiering" and "ingenuity".

Clarke had grown up during the Boer War, his family braving the 1899 Siege of Ladysmith by Boer forces. Across South Africa 250,000 British troops had been tied down by Boer Commandos, loosely organised bands of horsemen some 50,000 in strength.

The Boers formed militias, each fighter carrying whatever weaponry and kit he could muster. Dressed in regular khaki farming clothes, they were expert hunters and survivalists. Largely equipped by what they could win from the enemy – in this case, British troops – the Commando bands were held together by the charisma of their leaders.

The stories of their thrilling exploits were burned into Clarke's mind, and it seemed to him there was no reason why the Boer Commandos shouldn't be 'reborn', in Britain, to aim "mosquito stings upon the ponderous bulk of a German Army". He scribbled down the defining aspect of Commando operations: mobility – the ability to strike swiftly, in hit-and-run attacks – was key.

On 5 June Clarke presented his Commando proposal to Churchill, with the support of General John Dill, the chief of the imperial general staff (IGS). Churchill, of course, had direct experience of the Boer War. Despatched

to South Africa as a foreign correspondent, he was travelling on an armoured train when it was ambushed by Boer Commandos. Under fierce fire, Churchill was eventually captured.

Carted off to captivity in the Boer capital, Pretoria, his daring escape would become the stuff of legend. Scaling the prison fence, he moved only during the night hours, stealing food and drinking from streams. The Boers launched a manhunt, posters offering a reward for Churchill "dead or alive". But he managed to cross hundreds of miles of enemy territory and escape, the dash and daring of the Boer Commandos being etched deep in his mind.

The day after submitting his proposal, Clarke was given Churchill's enthusiastic backing. He was ordered to set up a 'raiding headquarters', to be given the innocuous sounding cover-name 'Section MO9', short for Military Office 9, and to "get a raid across the Channel at the earliest possible moment".



To further disguise MO9's true purpose, Clarke took the unusual step of recruiting several formidable women as HQ staff. The foremost, Constance Rumbold, was the daughter of Sir Horace Rumbold, Britain's pre-war ambassador to Berlin, who had repeatedly warned of Hitler's aggressive ambitions.

Constance Rumbold offered up the family home, on London's Grosvenor Crescent, as a covert meeting place for MO9 business. She founded a bogus charity, all MO9 officers reporting to Grosvenor Crescent in plain clothes, telling the butler they were on 'charity business'. London in 1940 was teeming with refugees from across Nazi-occupied Europe, and everyone was mindful of how 'loose talk costs lives'.

Clarke knew exactly what he sought from his Commandos, "We looked for the dash of the Elizabethan pirate, the Chicago gangster and the Frontier tribesman." His men would need to be self-starters, pressing on to their objective no matter what might have befallen their fellows.

He was inundated with volunteers, but there was precious little equipment to hand. His earliest recruits had to train with RAF Crash Boats, rescue craft designed to pluck downed pilots out of the sea.

Yet even as the first raid was being planned, the War Cabinet balked at Clarke calling his force the 'Commandos'. The name connoted the Boer irregulars, with their lack of military

## "MURDEROUS THUGS AND CUT-THROATS' WHO PREFERRED TO KILL THEIR ENEMIES RATHER THAN TO TAKE PRISONERS"

orderliness and discipline. Incredibly, they decreed that Clarke's unit should instead be known as Special Service troops, or 'SS' for short. Thankfully, General Dill stepped in to "give 'Commando' an authoritative blessing".

On the night of 24/25 June, 120 men of No. 2 Commando set sail in four Crash Boats. Led by Major Ronnie Tod, one of Clarke's earliest recruits, Clarke himself rode with them, although he was strictly forbidden from going ashore.

The raiders crept towards the night-dark French coast, off Le Touquet, in the Pas-de-Calais region. Just 20 days earlier the last of the little ships had fled in the opposite direction, carrying the remnants of a defeated British Army. It was a herculean feat to be striking back again so swiftly. The raiders landed successfully and there were fierce skirmishes ashore as the Commandos targeted a hotel known to billet German troops.

The Crash Boat in which Clarke was riding came under fierce fire from a German patrol.

It was also menaced by an enemy E-boat, a heavily-armed fast-attack craft capable of approaching 50 knots. Fortunately, the raiders gave the E-boat the slip.

Operation Collar was hailed as a success. The Germans had taken casualties and the Commandos had lost not a man. Ironically, one of those injured was Dudley Clarke himself, who had had his ear shot almost in half.

To a British nation desperate for some positive news, Operation Collar proved a real tonic, and a communiqué was issued to the press, "Naval and military units yesterday carried out successful reconnaissance of the enemy coastline. Landings were effected at a number of points and contact made with German troops. Casualties were inflicted and some enemy dead fell into our hands. Much useful information was obtained. Our forces suffered no casualties."

On the far side of the Atlantic the press really went to town, US newspapers hailing the bulldog spirit of this new breed of piratical

*All the Operation Colossus raiders were captured or killed. Pictured here in Italian POW camp Campo di Lavoro 102, from left, top row: Lance-Corporals Henderson, Pexton, Maher and Tomlin. Next row: Lance-Corporal Watson, Troopers Phillips, Samuels, Humphreys and Pryor, plus Sergeant Durie. Seated row: Trooper Parker, Sergeant Walker, Corporal Grice. Bottom row: Corporal O'Brien, Trooper Nastri and Sapper Davidson*



© Getty

© Paradata.org.uk



British raider. In time, Hitler would claim the Commandos were “terror and sabotage troops” who “acted outside the Geneva convention”. German propaganda would label them “murderous thugs and cut-throats” who preferred to kill their enemies rather than to take prisoners.

In Britain, Clarke was inundated with volunteers who wished to join the ranks of his daring volunteers for Special Service. At Churchill's urging, ten separate Commando units were to be formed, each of 500 men, one of which was to be an exclusively airborne unit.

At the war's outbreak, Churchill had been hugely impressed when Nazi Germany's Fallschirmjäger (paratroopers) had seized Belgium's key defences. Scores of DFS230 gliders had landed silently in waves, enabling German paratroopers to seize key objectives, opening the way for troops to use Belgium as the launch-pad for the coming Blitzkrieg.

Churchill had watched aghast, but typically had learned well from the enemy. “Let us raise a force of 10,000 parachutists,” he declared. The challenge was equipment: all the RAF could offer were a few ageing Whitley medium bombers, already obsolete. The first would-be paratroopers headed to Ringway, a windblown airstrip lying just to the south of Manchester, where Clarke's top-secret airborne training establishment was founded.

**“THIRTY-FOUR SAS  
PARACHUTISTS – AIDED BY  
TWO FIERCELY ANTI-FASCIST  
ITALIAN SOE AGENTS – LEAPT  
INTO COMBAT LADEN WITH  
WEAPONRY AND EXPLOSIVES,  
ON A MISSION OF SPECTACULAR  
DARING AND HEROISM”**

As Clarke was keen to distinguish this airborne force from his seaborne commandos, he inserted the word ‘Air’ into the Special Service volunteer name, at a stroke the Ringway volunteers becoming the Special Air Service. And so, unwittingly, a legend was born. The first unit was christened 11 Special Air Service Brigade; ‘11’, so as to bluff the enemy that ten other airborne brigades were already in existence.

Clarke's airborne forces were to be some of the first to strike again against the enemy. By autumn 1940, Operation Colossus was in the offing, a daring raid designed to prove that Britain had the pluck and punch to take the

fight deep into the enemy's back yard.

But Colossus was to be an operation that Clarke was sadly to miss. In November 1940 he received an urgent summons from General Archibald Wavell, commander of Middle East operations, ordering him to depart post haste for Cairo. There, Clarke was charged to develop the dark arts of trickery, deception and bluff, to help trounce the Italians in North Africa.

Bidding farewell to his Commandos with lingering regret, Clarke reached Cairo on 12 December 1940. His cover was that he was working for MI9, the British ‘escape and evasion factory’ charged to better enable Allied POWs to slip the enemy's clutches.

His real mission – codenamed Operation Abeam – was to fabricate the supposed existence of British airborne units in North Africa, which in truth did not exist. Realising that bending the truth was far better than creating a lie, Clarke ‘formed’ 1st Special Air Service, using faked documents, photos and reports, which he made sure fell into enemy hands.

He had dummy parachutists dropped in the open desert, where they would be seen by the enemy, whilst men wearing SAS uniforms wandered around the streets of Cairo, talking all-too-freely about their daredevil and cut-throat airborne missions.

In the summer of 1941, Clarke was to make the acquaintance of David Stirling,





recently-arrived in North Africa. Stirling shared with Clarke his ideas for creating a deep-desert raiding force. Clarke sensed an opportunity here to further his deception: if real parachutists could strike at the Italians' rear, it would give body to his lies.

He counselled Stirling to use the name of an already existing outfit, taking on their mantle and legacy. "Dudley Clarke promised to give me all the help he could," Stirling remarked of the moment, "if I would use the name of his bogus brigade of parachutists, which was the Special Air Service – the SAS." In fact, they were far from 'bogus': they were Clarke's originals, formed out of his earliest Commandos.

In February 1941, 36 men of Clarke's fledgling SAS had carried out Britain's first ever airborne mission – Operation Colossus, a daring raid on an aqueduct in Italy. Now all-but forgotten, Colossus had the personal backing of Churchill, who doggedly believed that airborne forces were vital to winning the war.

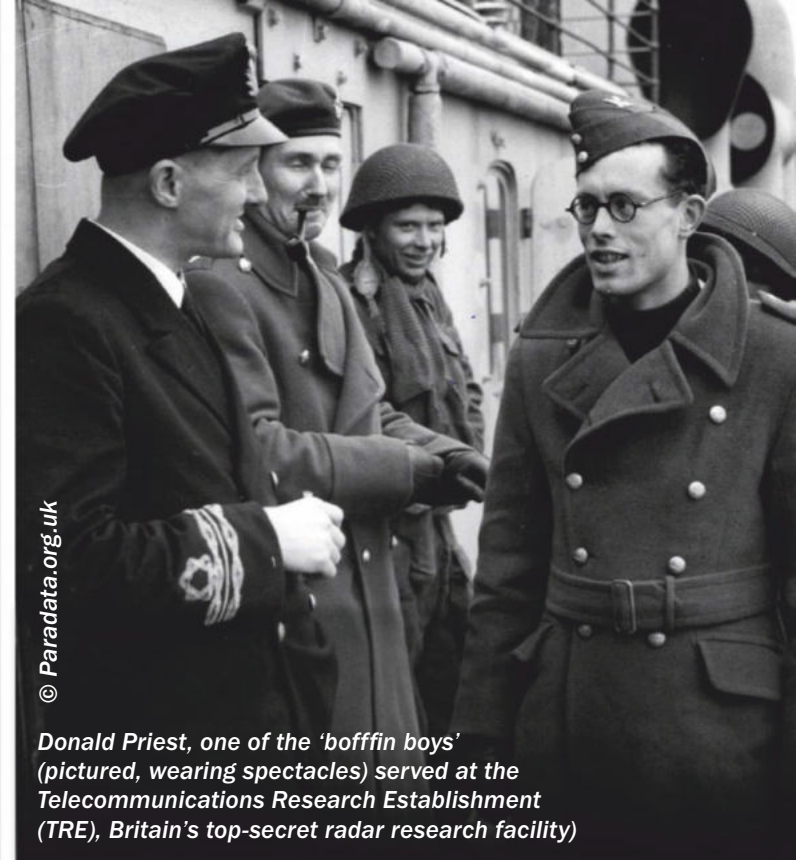
Dreamed up by an Oxford professor of classics seconded to the Special Operation Executive (SOE) – 'Churchill's Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare' – the aim of Colossus was to blow up an aqueduct channelling water from Italy's Apennine Mountains to the vital naval ports of Brindisi, Bari and Taranto – water which kept kept three million souls alive.

Once Churchill had personally signed off on the order, on 7 February 1941 Britain's fledgling airborne forces embarked on a fleet of ageing Whitley bombers, flying 1,600 miles through enemy airspace. Thirty-four SAS parachutists – aided by two fiercely anti-Fascist Italian SOE agents – leapt into combat laden with weaponry and explosives, on a mission of spectacular daring and heroism.

Against all odds, the raiders blew up the aqueduct, but Allied reconnaissance photos taken after the attack seemed to show it still intact. The Colossus saboteurs, commanded by the redoubtable Major Trevor 'Tag' Pritchard – an army boxing champion – had blown up the piers that supported the aqueduct, but photos shot from 10,000 feet failed to reveal that detail.

Colossus was duly reported as being a 'failure', those in high command concluding that the 36 raiders must have been captured. As a result, the submarine HMS Triumph was recalled from her top-secret mission to pluck the raiders off the Italian coastline and to spirit them to safety. Major Pritchard and his men were abandoned to their fates. All were subsequently captured or killed.

Months later, at their champion, Dudley Clarke's, urging, David Stirling had adopted the name 'SAS' plus the legacy of a unit that had been operational for more than a year.



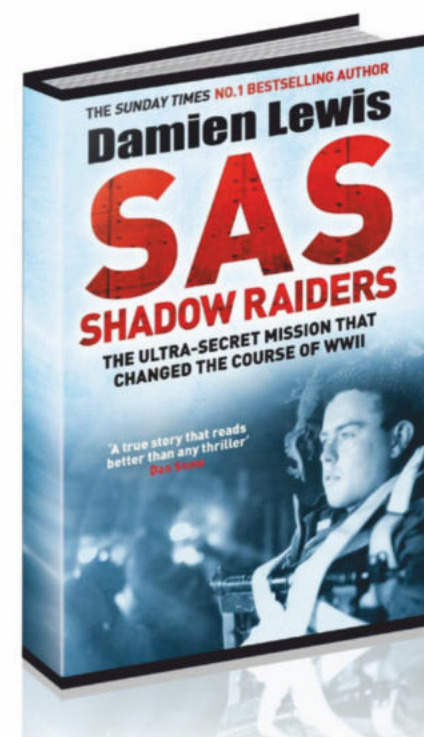
© Paradata.org.uk

Donald Priest, one of the 'boffin boys' (pictured, wearing spectacles) served at the Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE), Britain's top-secret radar research facility)

The 'lost' history of Operation Colossus and the founding of the SAS is recounted in Damien Lewis's new book, *SAS Shadow Raiders*. It has been hailed by Colonel Tim Collins, former commander of the SAS, as, "One of the most important Special Forces books ever written. It traces the daring, ingenuity and sheer courage that is the foundation of the modern service."

Veteran SAS operator and former Channel 4 *Who Dares Wins* personality, Colin Maclachlan, has described the book's revelations thus, "Another masterpiece of impeccable research that tells the story of how my predecessors in the SAS changed the course of WWII."

*SAS Shadow Raiders* is available now from Quercus Books [www.quercusbooks.co.uk](http://www.quercusbooks.co.uk)



**Clockwise from right:** Flight Sergeant Charles William 'Bill' Cox (second left) was a radar technician, here shown talking to Group Captain Sir Nigel Norman, the Air Commander of Operation Biting, just after the raid

Christened No. 11 SAS Battalion, the 450-strong unit had few aircraft with which to train. They had to make do with a handful of obsolete Armstrong Whitworth Whitley bombers – nicknamed the 'Flying Barn Door' – plummeting vertically through a hole cut in the floor (a C47 is pictured in the background)

The raiders of Operation Biting heroically return showing Major John Frost, far-left of the bridge

Before the war Sergeant Percy Celements worked as a miner

Operation Colossus team member Sapper James Parker, a demolitions expert

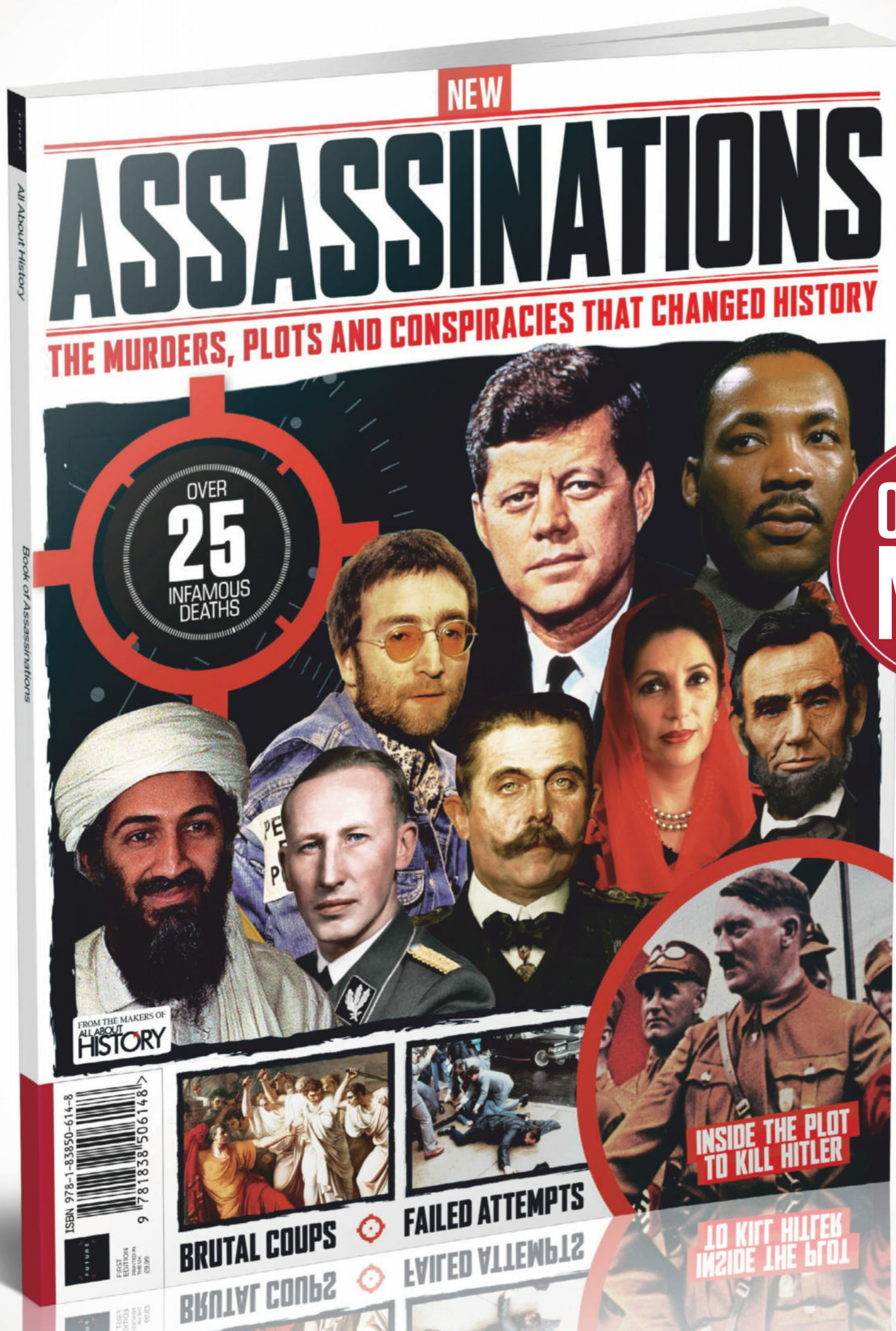


THANKS TO THE PARA  
DATA TEAM FOR THEIR  
HELP WITH THIS FEATURE.  
[WWW.PARADATA.ORG.UK](http://WWW.PARADATA.ORG.UK)



# SOME DEATHS SHOCK THE WORLD, OTHERS CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY

Delve into the coups and conspiracies behind history's most infamous murders. Including over 25 of the world's most powerful and influential figures, from Abraham Lincoln to Franz Ferdinand and JFK to Martin Luther King



**FUTURE**

Ordering is easy. Go online at:

[www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk)

Or get it from selected supermarkets & newsagents





## 86 WHEN MOVIE-MAKING GOES MEDIEVAL

DR MICHAEL JONES  
DISCUSSES HOW BIG-  
SCREEN DEPICTIONS  
OF THE MIDDLE  
AGES STAND UP TO  
HISTORICAL SCRUTINY

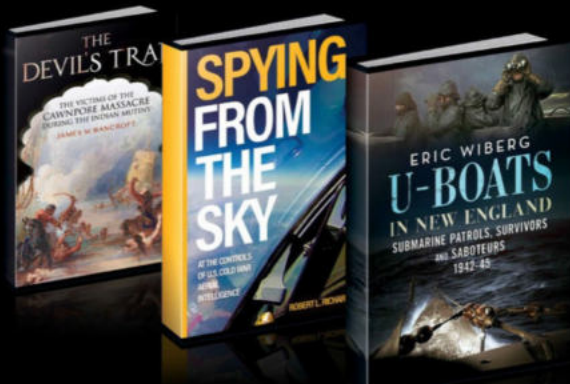
HISTORY  
WAR

# HOMEFRONT



84

MUSEUMS & EVENTS: PULLING UP  
CHURCHILL'S CARPET



88

THE LATEST FILMS AND BOOKS  
ON YOUR SCREENS AND SHELVES



98

ARTEFACT OF WAR: RORKE'S  
DRIFT SERVICE REVOLVER

[www.historyanswers.co.uk](http://www.historyanswers.co.uk)

f FACEBOOK  
/HistoryofWarMag

t TWITTER  
@HistoryofWarMag



# MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Discover a prime minister's preserved carpet, the truth about the Trojan War and Fort William's martial past



Source: IWM

*Churchill broadcasted important speeches from this study including warning Britons to prepare for an invasion and in response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor*

## CHURCHILL'S WAR FLOOR

**The Imperial War Museum has deployed the latest technology to save a rare carpet in the wartime prime minister's underground bedroom**

Located beneath the Treasury in Whitehall, the Churchill War Rooms are one of the five branches of the Imperial War Museum. Constructed in 1938 from cleared spaces, sandbagged alcoves and telephone lines, this subterranean base became operational on 27 August 1939. The site was a central hub for gathering military intelligence and had 500 people working underground at its height.

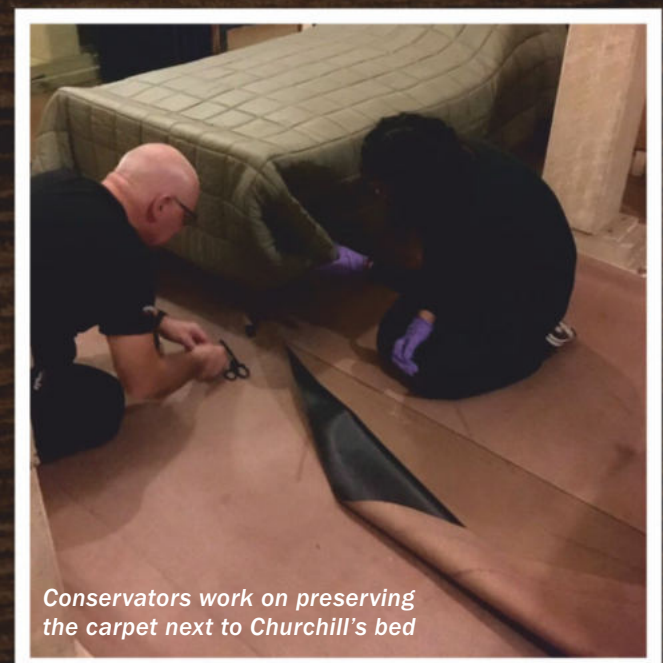
Winston Churchill was given his own bedroom study in the War Rooms after becoming prime minister where he made four major speeches between September 1940 and December 1941. Today, the IWM offers private 'Behind the Glass' tours of three of the most significant rooms – Churchill's bedroom, the Map Room and Cabinet War Room. Lasting for an hour with an expert guide for up to ten people, the tour gives visitors exclusive access to rooms that are preserved almost exactly as they were left at the end of WWII.

This conservation requires great care and the IWM has now taken innovative steps to preserve the original carpet in Churchill's bedroom. His study is the only fully carpeted

room and was a luxury that indicated seniority. To protect the carpet from deterioration, the IWM has enlisted the help of Eyemats, a leading expert in protecting historic floors throughout the UK and Europe.

Eyemats has covered the original WWII carpet with a painstakingly accurate synthetic duplicate. This is created by digitally stitching together thousands of high-resolution images of the original, including historic damage and unique details. This detailed conservation work reflects the fundamental challenge at the War Rooms, which requires preserving a location that was only constructed to meet the short-term demands of war.

Lucy Tindle, exhibitions and interpretation manager at the IWM says, "Churchill may only have slept in his bedroom a handful of times, but his underground chamber remains historically important as the room in which he broadcast key speeches. This is one of the few locations where you can really walk in the footsteps of Churchill and see a historic WWII location just as it was left when the lights were turned out at the end of the war.



*Conservators work on preserving the carpet next to Churchill's bed*

Source: Kevin Thondycroft / IWM

"There's evidence throughout the War Rooms to suggest that the series of underground rooms was far from purpose-built. It was in fact a classic example of British improvisation. It's a challenging task but new technologies and conservation techniques, including the amazing work Eyemats do, will allow us to better preserve the site that it continues to tell it's remarkable story."

**FOR MORE ABOUT TOURS OF THE WAR ROOMS PLEASE VISIT: [WWW.IWM.ORG.UK/EVENTS/CHURCHILL-WAR-ROOMS-PRIVATE-TOURS](http://WWW.IWM.ORG.UK/EVENTS/CHURCHILL-WAR-ROOMS-PRIVATE-TOURS)**



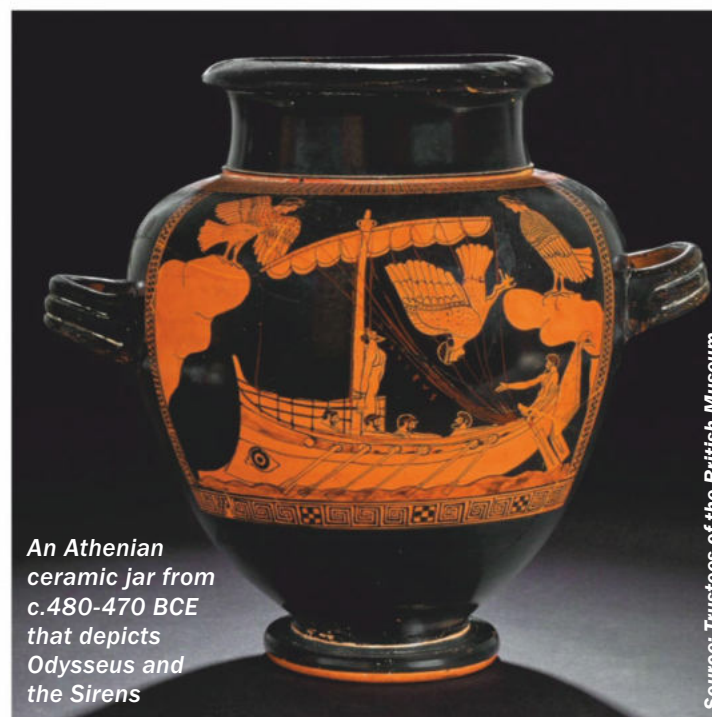
This 1825 marble sculpture of the wounded warrior Achilles includes a restored gilded arrow in his heel

Source: The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth



An Athenian ceramic jar from c.480-470 BCE that depicts Odysseus and the Sirens

Source: Trustees of the British Museum



## TROY REVEALED

**The British Museum is hosting a remarkable exhibition about the legendary but tantalisingly real Trojan War**

'Troy: Myth and Reality' is the first major exhibition of its kind in the UK. It reveals the lasting legacy of stories from the Trojan War, which were first told by early poets such as Homer and Virgil. Long considered to be mythical, the archaeological world was upended when Heinrich Schliemann discovered ancient Troy in what is now Turkey in the 1870s. The revelation that Troy was a real place and that there may be some truth behind the legends continues to be a source of fascination and debate.

'Myth and Reality' marks the return of finds from Schliemann's excavations for the first time since they were displayed in London almost 150 years ago. Nearly 300 outstanding objects reveal the story of Troy including bronze weapons, pottery, silverware and sculptures.

The Trojan War powerfully evokes the human cost of conflict and displacement. The curatorial team has therefore teamed up with the charities Crisis and Waterloo Uncovered to highlight how the characters of Troy's story resonate with displaced people and soldiers today.

Additionally, on 17 January 2020, Edward Richards will lead a deaf-led British Sign Language tour to explore the exhibition's highlights. The tour lasts from 6.15pm to 7.45pm with tickets costing £7.50 although British Museum members and access companions go free.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: [WWW.BRITISHMUSEUM.ORG/TROY](http://WWW.BRITISHMUSEUM.ORG/TROY)**

## JACOBITES AT FORT WILLIAM



**The West Highland Museum is home to a fascinating array of local Scottish military history with a special emphasis on the famous 18th century rebellions**

The town of Fort William has distinctly military origins. Its first settlement was a Cromwellian wooden fort that was built in 1654 and named after William III, after the Glorious Revolution in 1688. Located at the westernmost end of the Great Glen fault that runs from Inverness, Fort William was of great strategic and political importance for control of the Highlands. A garrison town grew around the fort and the settlement played important roles during events such as the Glencoe Massacre and the Jacobite rebellions.

The West Highland Museum was founded in 1922 by local enthusiasts who initially had neither a collection nor a building to display objects. Now housed in the heart of the town in Cameron Square, the museum's primary purpose is to collect, conserve and present items of historical or cultural significance that are related to the West Highland area.

The museum contains a fascinating array of military artefacts including a facsimile of a letter that ordered the Glencoe Massacre, Bonnie Prince Charlie's waistcoat and paraphernalia from Highland regiments ranging from the Boer War to WWII. A special emphasis is on the Jacobites with exhibits spread across several rooms. One of the newest sections is the Commando Room, which tells the story of commandos who trained in Lochaber during the Second World War.

*Above, left: The museum is located in a building that used to be a former branch of the British Linen Bank*

*Left: The museum contains items that belonged to Flora MacDonald and Jacobite artefacts that contain hidden portraits of Bonnie Prince Charlie*



Images: Alamy

**FOR MORE VISIT: [WWW.WESTHIGHLANDMUSEUM.ORG.UK](http://WWW.WESTHIGHLANDMUSEUM.ORG.UK)**



# WHEN MOVIE-MAKING GOES MEDIEVAL

Are films about the Middle Ages losing empathy with the past? Dr Michael Jones discusses

**I**n 1999 viewers of Luc Besson's *The Messenger: The Story Of Joan Of Arc* were plunged into a graphic scene where a girl is violently raped and murdered – an horrific sight that shocked many viewers. A terrified Joan watched through cracks in a door as her older sister suffered this terrible fate at the hands of English soldiers. Suddenly all became clear: her mission to drive the English out of France was fuelled by an all-consuming desire for revenge.

There was one problem – Besson had made the whole thing up. It was unlikely that Joan had even seen an English soldier before she rode to the relief of Orléans in the spring of 1429. Little was known about Joan of Arc's older sister Catherine. She had left the family home in Domrémy for the nearby village of Greux, where she married. She died in childbirth at the age of 24, at around the same time Joan sought out the king of France. By making an invented rape and murder scene the driver for his narrative,

the director replaced a human tragedy with a cinematic travesty.

Carl Dreyer's 1928 film, *The Passion Of Joan Of Arc*, was firmly grounded in historical evidence and remains the best treatment of her life. But over the last 25 years the Middle Ages have become something of a fact-free zone. Leading the charge, was Mel Gibson's 1995 epic *Braveheart*. Gibson remained unrepentant about his most astonishing historical fantasy, where Edward I flung his son's hapless companion

**“JOAN OF ARC'S MISSION TO DRIVE THE ENGLISH OUT OF FRANCE WAS FUELLED BY AN ALL-CONSUMING DESIRE FOR REVENGE. THERE WAS ONE PROBLEM – BESSON HAD MADE THE WHOLE THING UP”**

Film poster for  
Luc Besson's *The  
Messenger: The  
Story Of Joan Of Arc*

Image: Alamy





Image: Alamy

Still from Netflix's  
*Outlaw King* (2018),  
starring Chris Pine as  
King Robert Bruce

Piers Gaveston out of a castle window (in fact Edward sent him into exile, but that clearly was not dramatic enough). “What I am doing is giving you a cinematic experience first, an educational one second,” he claimed. But in portraying William Wallace’s famous victory at Stirling Bridge without reference to the bridge over the Forth which defined the shape of the battle, Mel Gibson was not only butchering history but missing a cinematic opportunity.

At least Gibson got the result right. In 2011 the movie *Ironclad* broke new ground in its treatment of the siege of Rochester Castle (a military action undertaken in the aftermath of Magna Carta). A small group of knights bravely held this imposing fortress, overlooking the Medway, against the army of King John. It was a vicious siege (so far, so good), and the castle was close to defeat when a relief army led by the French Prince Louis, the son of Philip Augustus, arrived – forcing John into an ignominious retreat. “We held!” one of the defenders exclaimed triumphantly.

Only they didn’t. King John took Rochester Castle at the end of November 1215. The French army showed up six months later.

In a striking scene, one of the castle’s captains, William d’Aubigny, was placed on a trebuchet (a siege engine) and hurled into the wall of the keep by a vengeful John. In reality, he did not defect from the royalist cause until the arrival of the French in 1216, and died returning from crusade four years later.

It is possible to shock an audience without resorting to make-believe. Ridley Scott’s 2005 film *Kingdom Of Heaven* told of the fall of the

crusader kingdom of Jerusalem in the late 12th century. In the aftermath of Saladin’s victory over the crusaders at Hattin, Saladin passed a cup of iced rose water to one of his captives, Guy of Lusignan, king of Jerusalem. Guy then offered it to Raynald of Châtillon, Saladin’s mortal enemy. As customary law proscribed that a man who had given food or drink to a prisoner could not kill him, Saladin simply stated that Guy had given Châtillon the drink, not him – and then slit Raynald’s throat. It was undoubtedly a distressing moment, but one vouched for by contemporary sources.

Brian Helgeland’s *A Knight’s Tale* (2001) made no great claims for historical accuracy – a tournament started with a rousing rendition of Queen’s *We Will Rock You* – but was an enjoyable romp nonetheless, with a particularly pleasing performance by James Purefoy as the Black Prince. However, *The Black Death* (2010) struck a jarring note in its obsession with witches, proclaiming 128 of them burnt in one night. Witches were never systematically killed in 14th century England; the trials came centuries later. Ingmar Bergman’s *The Seventh Seal* (1957) remains the best evocation of this troubled time.

More recently, Netflix entered the fray. *Outlaw King* (2018) showed Robert Bruce’s rise to power, while *The King* (2019) focussed on Henry V.

Both were pre-occupied with the dangers of glorifying conflict. The sentiment was well-intentioned, but it distanced the films from the medieval past they were trying to illuminate.

*Outlaw King* covered a short time-span, from 1304-1307, in which Robert Bruce was played as a thoughtful, almost pensive character. His drive, cold calculation and ruthless ambition were largely missing. Bruce’s early co-operation with Edward I’s regime was understated, as was the likely plan to murder his rival, John Comyn, to become king of Scotland (in 1306). And his first important victory against the English at Loudoun Hill was mangled, incorrectly showing the future Edward II opposing him on the battlefield and then challenging him to a duel.

The depiction of Henry V in *The King* was more wayward, imagining him – during the reign of his father – as a pacifist. It was a bewildering stance, for Prince Henry displayed consummate courage at the battle of Shrewsbury (only briefly touched upon in the film), continuing to fight even after being wounded in the face by an arrow. And far from being alienated by violence, he wrote to his father whilst campaigning against Owen Glendower in Wales, sharing his joy in the ruthless suppression of the enemy.

Henry V was no reluctant warrior at Agincourt, but thoroughly steeped in the martial values of his time. Sadly, it is these cinematic portrayals that are losing touch with them.



Michael Jones is the  
author of *The Black Prince*  
(Head of Zeus, 2017)



# HISTORY *of* WAR REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books and films



A RACE AGAINST TIME TO AVERT BATTLEFIELD DISASTER, SAM MENDES'S INTENSE EPIC IMMERSSES YOU IN THE SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND HORRORS OF WWI

## 1917

**Director:** Sam Mendes  
**Starring:** George MacKay,  
Dean-Charles Chapman,  
Benedict Cumberbatch  
**Released:** 10 January (UK)

The Western Front, 1917. A pair of British soldiers are tasked with carrying a vital message to a distant division, calling off an attack that they're told is doomed to fail. To reach their destination they must travel across miles of enemy territory in just 24 hours.

They pick their way through the wilderness of no-mans-land, creeping through barbed wire mazes and around lake-sized shell craters. Each stop on their journey reveals new levels of devastation and death, and the characters they encounter on the way are no less damaged – Andrew Scott's brief appearance is a memorable reminder of the damaging impact the front line had on soldiers' mental health.

Narratively *1917*'s do-or-die 'solo mission' into the unknown unavoidably draws comparison with *Saving Private Ryan*. However, with renowned cinematographer Roger Deakins (*No Country For Old Men*, *True Grit*) at the lens, the story unfolds in a completely immersive viewing experience, radically different from anything previous. The camera moves between scenes seamlessly, giving the impression of one long shot as we



follow the pair on their journey, panning along across swathes of battle-scarred terrain. The result is that the horrific sights of war – half-buried corpses, rats chewing on human bone – are almost normalised and blended into the scenes; after all, these are sights to which soldiers often sadly became accustomed.

A telling lesson director Sam Mendes (*Jarhead*, *Skyfall*) has taken from other war epics is found in the diversity of the soldiers on screen. Whereas the lines of troops on the beaches in Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk* were criticised for being too homogeneous, here a deliberate effort has been made to represent the global war contribution. In 1914, Britain's empire answered (or was forced to answer) the call to arms, meaning as well as accents from the British Isles, voices from India, the West Indies, South Africa and elsewhere would have been heard on the Western Front. *1917* achieves this important historical balance without feeling forced – not resorting to a jarring history lesson, but providing a counterweight to the traditional representation of the men who fought and died.



However, this doesn't mean Mendes doesn't occasionally slide into the muddy shell hole of stereotypes and often-debunked myths of the First World War. Those familiar with the territory will certainly cringe at some clumsy exposition early on – we even hear the immortal line "over by Christmas". In another scene, a plum-voiced general bleats hysterically at a gang of line troops struggling to shift a fallen tree from the road; lions, donkeys and so on. It's these well-worn depictions of the war that cause historians to despair, but for general audiences hits the familiar beats of a conflict that still remains largely misunderstood.

This takes nothing away from what is the finest big-screen depiction of the First World War in years. George MacKay and Dean-Charles Chapman's performances strike a balance as both war-weary soldiers, and terrified young men thrown into a nightmarish journey. The supporting lineup of stars also explores more everyday experiences of the war. The result is a war movie destined to become a classic. **TW**



# PETSAMO AND KIRKENES 1944

A CONCISE YET DRAMATIC, FAST-PACED AND FASCINATING INTRODUCTION TO THE LAST MAJOR CLASH OF ARMS IN THE NORTHERN ARCTIC

**Writer:** David Greentree

**Artist:** Graham Turner

**Publisher:** Osprey Publishing

**Price:** £14.99

**Released:** Out now

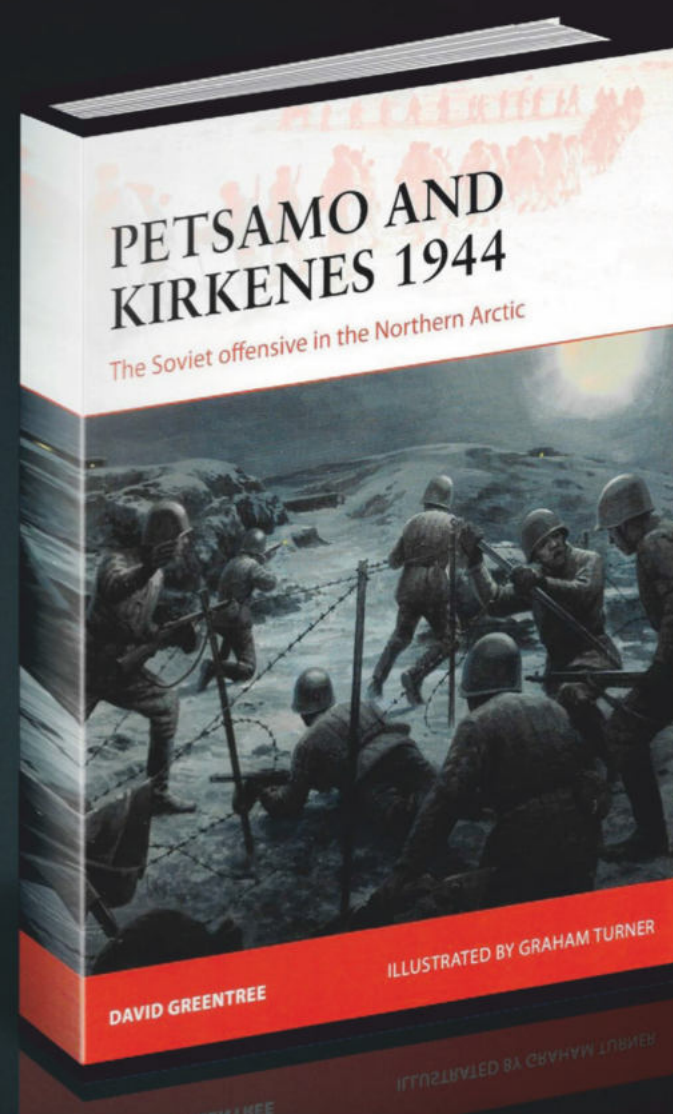
For decades, histories of the Second World War published in the West largely failed to give proper recognition to the brutal and harrowing conflict fought between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Thankfully, this long injustice has slowly begun to be addressed in recent years with the publication of numerous new studies that focus on the fighting along the vast Eastern Front.

However, the bitter struggle between these two battle-hardened powers in the Arctic region and northern Norway are perhaps still almost unknown to many of us. As such, David Greentree's new book on the Petsamo-Kirkenes Offensive is a very welcome one.

The Petsamo-Kirkenes Offensive was a Soviet operation led by General Kirill

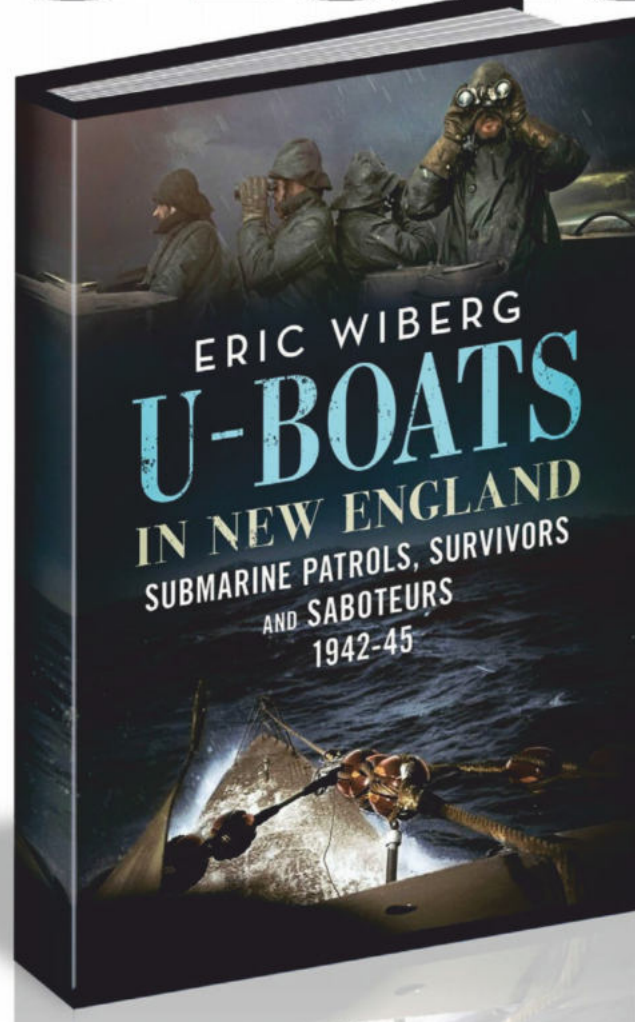
Meretskov against the German XIX, Gebirgs-Korps commanded by General der Gebirgstruppe Ferdinand Jodl. Its aim was to capture the Finnish town of Petsamo and the Norwegian port of Kirkenes. It would be a bloody 22-day contest that resulted in almost 9,000 German and 16,000 Soviet casualties. Ending in Soviet victory, yet a successful German withdrawal, the offensive would be the last major clash of arms in the Arctic region.

Following the familiar format of Osprey's successful *Campaign* series, Greentree provides some interesting background information and a handy chronology before examining the opposing forces and their respective strategies. Next follows a short but detailed and highly interesting chapter on the devastating offensive itself and its aftermath. Clearly written, well researched and superbly illustrated, this book is an excellent introduction to a little-known event in Second World War history that many more should know about. **MS**



**“IT WOULD BE A BLOODY 22-DAY CONTEST THAT RESULTED IN ALMOST 9,000 GERMAN AND 16,000 SOVIET CASUALTIES”**

# U-BOATS IN NEW ENGLAND



DETAILS OF U-BOAT ATTACKS IN NEW ENGLAND WATERS AND THE LANDINGS OF GERMAN AGENTS BETWEEN 1942 AND 1945

**Writer:** Eric Wiberg **Publisher:** Fonthill Media Ltd **Price:** £35

Eric Wiberg has compiled a weighty 408-page volume seeking to detail all U-boat operations within New England waters during the Second World War; a difficult task as most U-boats transited the area during a wider ranging patrol.

However, Wiberg has achieved considerable detail and balanced the account with American counter measures – or lack of them – as well as merchant survivor stories.

More diligent editing could have avoided many confusing passages of text. Furthermore, an editor with thorough knowledge of the Wehrmacht, and Kriegsmarine in particular, would have detected errors that have crept into the story. For example, the Abwehr is not “a secret guerrilla division within German Military Intelligence Corps”, and the rank Obergefreiter does not denote a torpedo mechanic.

There is an obvious over-reliance on the excellent uboat.net and uboatarchive.net

websites in such things as the biographical details recounted of each U-boat commander and some of their war diary entries. Any minor errors or omissions from the websites are therefore repeated. For example, a ‘Trauchnetter’ is a Tauchretter; a rebreather that doubled as a life vest, not a raft or a standard life preserver. Also, the number of commanders stated to have received ‘no decorations’ during the war is incorrect. Though uboat.net may not contain thorough lists for each officer, they variously received Iron Crosses of both class, U-boat badges and so on, during various stages of their careers.

The author's understanding of U-boat operations sometimes appears lacking, but he is on much surer ground with the Merchant Navy and vivid recollections of the hardships of torpedoed seamen; aboard lifeboats cast adrift in the Atlantic Ocean and even once ashore. **LP**



# SPYING FROM THE SKY

HOW ALTITUDE WAS THE ANSWER TO AMERICA'S MOST PRESSING INTELLIGENCE PROBLEM

**Author:** Robert L. Richardson **Publisher:** Casemate **Price:** £25

The story of America's Cold War aerial intelligence programme is both fascinating and important. Robert L. Richardson's book takes us inside that story through an extensive series of interviews with Colonel William James Gregory, a decorated hero of World War II and beyond. Learning about a military programme through the experiences of one man can result in a limited picture, but that is not the case here, because Gregory was at the heart of the aerial intelligence community and repeatedly at the cutting edge of the programme. He flew the planes, carried out the missions and was in charge of the U-2 programme during one of the most critical periods of the Cold War, when the world appeared to be on the brink of a nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Russians. His story, then, is in large part synonymous with that of the aerial intelligence programme.

William 'Greg' Gregory's life began in rural Tennessee, but his desire to lift himself out of poverty drove him to college and then the Civilian Pilot Training Program. It would be fair to say that Williams was a natural, and he went on to serve in World War II, flying P-38s in North Africa. His path eventually placed him at the controls of the RB-57D, a modified Canberra used in an aerial reconnaissance role.

America's need for intelligence on the military strength of the Soviets was critical by the middle of the 1950s, and high-altitude flights were the only sure way of gathering it – but they were fraught with danger, both because of the political ramifications of getting caught and the threat of the aeroplanes being shot down.

How the Americans navigated through this perilous period is told with great authority by Richardson. Although Williams remains at the heart of the story, Richardson introduces wider elements, so this never feels like a narrowly focused biography. The huge input from Williams (via dozens of interviews as well as taped dictations and other correspondence), means the book provides a genuine insight into a secretive world.

And Williams was no minor player, either. Having taken the controls of America's most technologically advanced spy planes, he understood how to fly them and how to bring them home safely, making him the perfect man to lead the aerial intelligence programme, which he did during a critical period that included the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the build-up to America's involvement in Vietnam.

The intelligence gathered by U-2 spy planes during the Missile Crisis played a crucial role in allowing President John F.



Kennedy to defuse an explosive situation, and Williams was personally thanked in a letter from the president.

Insightful, packed with information and written with flair, this is an illuminating and at times breathtaking story of high-altitude reconnaissance. It is an important book for anyone with an interest in the Cold War, military aviation technology or the psyche of pilots who operate on the very edge of what is possible. **DS**



A view from the cockpit of a U-2 spy plane

Right: During a 1966 mission, pilot Renliang Spike Chuang saw this surface-to-air missile breaking the cloud

Source: Wiki / Air and Space Smithsonian



# THE DEVIL'S TRAP

## THE VICTIMS OF THE CAWNPORE MASSACRE DURING THE INDIAN MUTINY

THE HEART-BREAKING TRUE STORY OF THE MOST BRUTAL EPISODE OF THE INDIAN MUTINY TOLD THROUGH THE LIVES OF ITS VICTIMS

**Writer:** James W. Bancroft

**Publisher:** Frontline Books

**Price:** £25

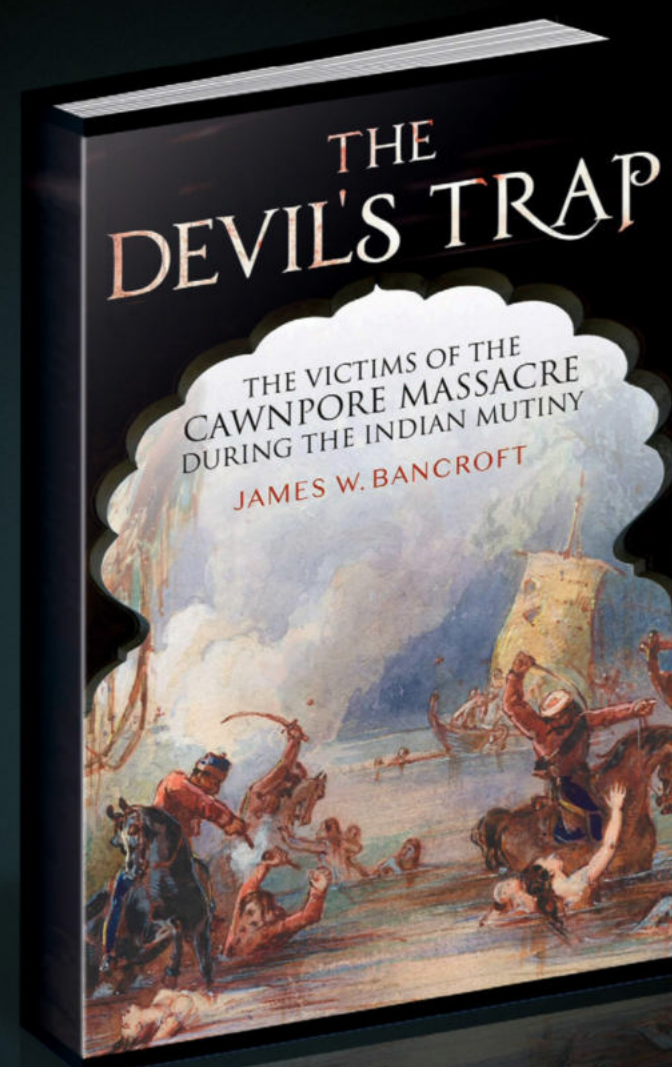
**Released:** 19 February 2020

The Siege of Cawnpore is without doubt the most cruel, brutal and bloody episode of the Indian Mutiny, a conflict that presented the greatest challenge to British authority in India during the 19th century. Indeed, the author rightly writes the following, somewhat unsettling words, at the beginning of his introduction, "It was inhumanity at its worst, the Devil himself could not devise a more spine-chilling scenario, and people of a sensitive disposition must not read on."

Nevertheless, anyone with a serious interest in the mutiny should read on and be prepared for the horrors that follow.

Following the outbreak of the mutiny in May 1857, the British garrison at Cawnpore came under siege by rebel forces within weeks. Along with the small force of soldiers under Major-General Sir Hugh Wheeler, the besieged also consisted of many civilians including women and children. Lusting for blood, the rebels soon attacked the defenders, relentlessly bombarding them with deadly cannon and musket fire. If that was not enough, the ordeal of the garrison was made worse by the horrendous conditions in which they desperately struggled to survive. Suffering from severe thirst and heatstroke, many would succumb to disease if not the bullets of their enemy.

Unlike the garrison at nearby Lucknow, who were also besieged but holding out, the pressure and conditions at Cawnpore



eventually proved too much for the defenders. In exchange for a rather dubious promise of safe passage out of the city, the garrison surrendered. It was a fateful decision, for most of the men would subsequently be butchered on the banks of the Ganges River at Sati Chaura Ghat. The rebels then herded the women and children into a house known as the Bibighar, where they were held until 15 July 1857. On this date they met what can only be described as an evil and barbaric end, the rebels slaughtering their captives in a frenzied attack with cleavers. The cut and battered bodies were then heartlessly thrown down a well.

The story of the Cawnpore massacres will be well-known to those interested in British military or Indian history of the period. Yet, author and historian James W. Bancroft has re-told the story from a different perspective, that of putting the victims at the heart of the narrative. Within the pages we meet many individuals, both military and civilian, such as: Charles Hillersdon, the magistrate of Cawnpore district; Katherine Lindsay, wife of a senior civil servant, and her four children; Amelia Horne, daughter of a captain in the East India Company army; Captain John Moore of Her Majesty's 32nd Light Infantry; Lieutenant Swynfen Jervis of the Bengal Engineers; and Assistant-Surgeon Thomas Heathcote, a doctor in the Medical Staff Corps. There are, of course, many other now long-forgotten names.

Bancroft has produced a meticulously researched and well-written account that brings to the reader the true heart-breaking human tragedy of the Cawnpore massacre in a way not previously achieved. The brutality of the subject matter sometimes makes it a difficult read but for anyone wishing to understand the true, dark nature of the Indian Mutiny it is a must-read. **MS**



James W. Bancroft's book explores the brutality of the Siege of Cawnpore



5 BEST BOOKS ON

# THE LUFTWAFFE

The epic rise and fall of the air arm of Nazi Germany's war machine, makes riveting reading

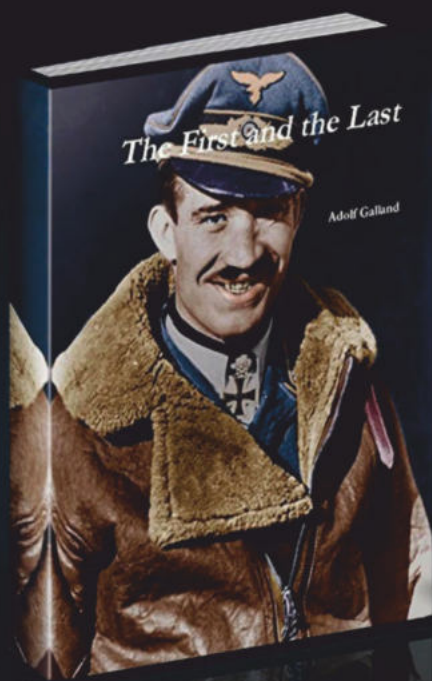
## LUFTWAFFE FIGHTER ACES

The Jagdflieger And Their Combat  
Tactics And Techniques

Mike Spick

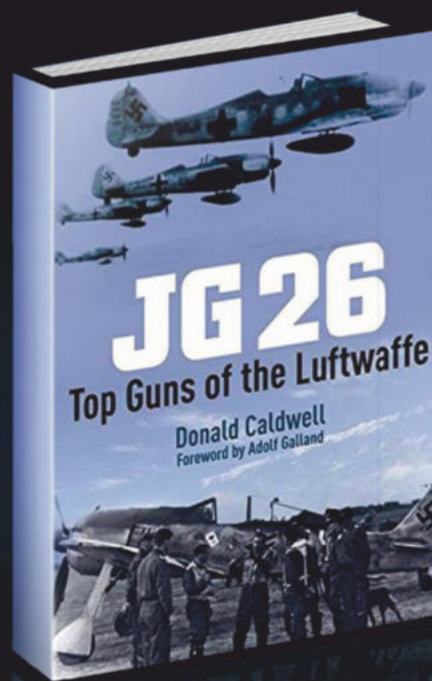
During World War II, German fighter pilots amassed spectacular aerial victory tallies with 106 aces recording at least 100 kills. Taking on post-war scepticism, the author examines the process of crediting claims while assessing the effectiveness of Luftwaffe training and tactics. His exhaustive research provides a plausible rationale for the amazing combat record achieved.

**"GERMAN FIGHTER PILOTS AMASSED  
SPECTACULAR AERIAL VICTORY TALLIES WITH  
106 ACES RECORDING AT LEAST 100 KILLS"**



**The First  
And The Last**  
Adolf Galland

Luftwaffe Generalleutnant Adolf Galland, an air combat legend, tells his story in *The First And The Last*. World War II fighter ace and General of Fighters, Galland claimed 104 aerial victories, flew 705 combat missions and was shot down four times. He challenged Hitler's authority as the war's tide turned against Nazi Germany.



**JG 26:  
Top Guns  
Of The Luftwaffe**  
Donald Caldwell

An elite Luftwaffe fighter wing, JG 26 operated from 1939 to 1945. This chronicle of the unit's combat experience is drawn from diary entries, official reports and interviews with over 50 surviving pilots. The author has constructed a gripping day-to-day narrative of the unit's exploits during the air war in Europe.



**The Luftwaffe War  
Diaries: The German Air  
Force In World War II**  
Cajus Bekker

Perhaps the only definitive account of the World War II history of the Luftwaffe from a German source, this single volume tells the story of the strategic direction and deployment of the German air forces from the Blitzkrieg in Poland to the defence of the Reich against the Allied bomber offensive.



**Stuka  
Pilot**  
Hans Ulrich Rudel

Oberst Hans Ulrich Rudel earned fame in World War II flying the Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive bomber. Rudel destroyed over 500 tanks and 2,000 ground targets, and sank a Soviet warship. He was the only recipient of Nazi Germany's highest decoration, the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Golden Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds.



# FREQUENT VISITS TO THE BATHROOM?

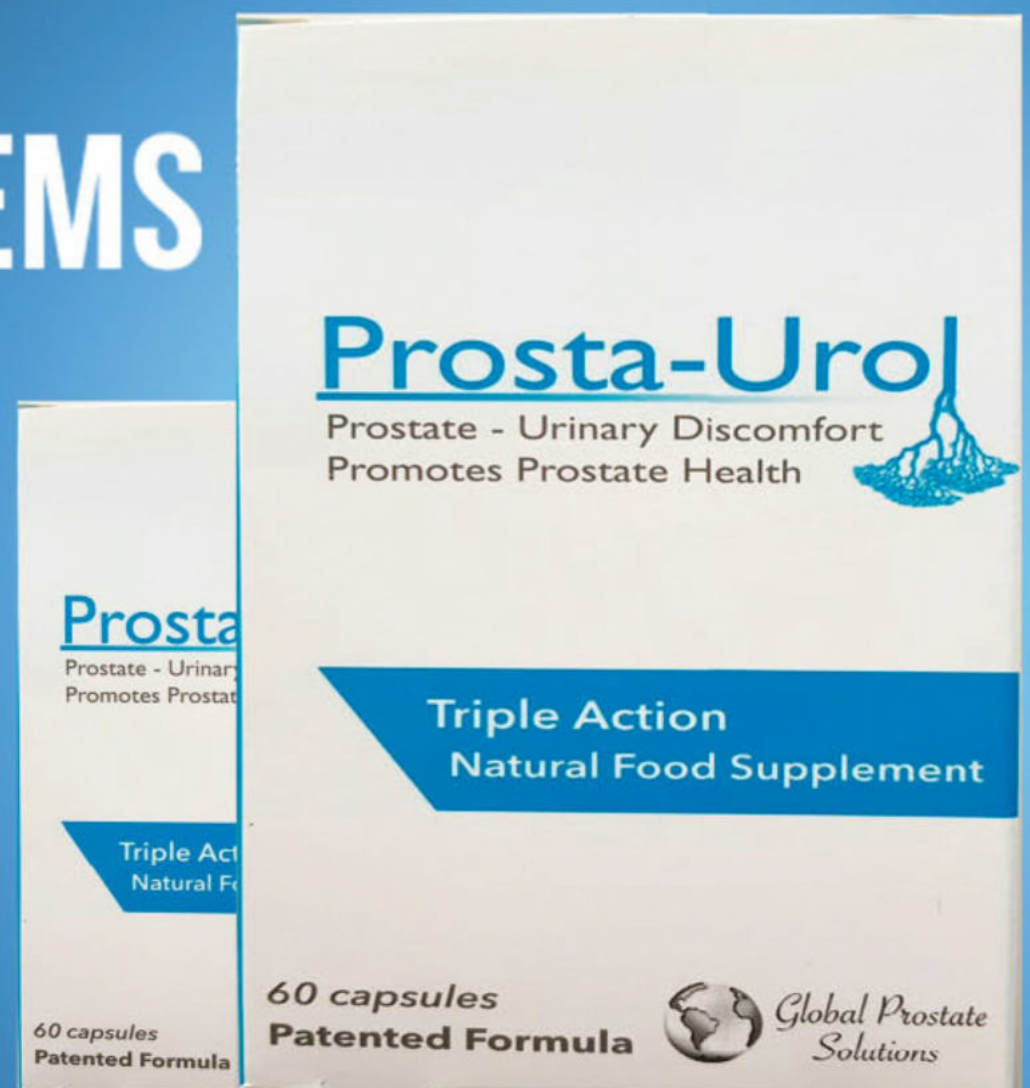
PROMOTES PROSTATE HEALTH

TAKE ACTION

GET RELIEF FROM  
URINARY PROBLEMS

BUY 1 GET 1

FREE



PROSTAUROL.CO.UK



01245672050





# WWII THIS MONTH... JANUARY 1940

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, every issue **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place each month of the conflict



Image: Getty

## MITFORD EMERGENCY

A rich socialite and passionate Nazi supporter, Unity Mitford was one of the most controversial figures in 1930s England. At the outbreak of WWII, she was living in Germany, where she had become a close confidante of Hitler. Distraught at the news that the country of her birth was now at war with the Third Reich, Unity shot herself in the head. The pistol, gifted to her by Hitler, failed to deliver a killing blow and instead left her in a critical condition. Returning to England in 1940, via neutral Switzerland, she never made a full recovery from the wound.



## BRITISH RATIONING BEGINS

From 8 January, the purchase of a range of everyday food products came under regulation by the UK government, in order to control food shortages expected as a result of the German U-boat campaign. Dairy products, pork, sugar, cooking fat and tea were all restricted to certain amounts, per adult per week. Ration books were issued by shopkeepers to log each customer's allotted ration. Later in the war, additional food products were added to the rationing list, and the Ministry of Food promoted 'make-do' methods of avoiding food waste and creating improvised 'wartime dishes' using limited ingredients.



## BATTLE OF RAATE ROAD

Into the New Year, 1940, Soviet forces continued to be driven back and hampered by highly mobile and agile Finnish defenders. A column of the Soviet 44th Rifle Division, already on the backfoot after the Battle of Suomussalmi, was picked apart by Finnish troops – separated into isolated pockets, or mottis, and destroyed piecemeal. Although the Winter War would continue until March, it was clear by January that this tactic was winning battles. By the end of the battle, the Raate Road was strewn with thousands of frozen Soviet corpses and destroyed vehicles.



Image: Alamy

## HMS EXMOUTH SUNK

In the early hours of 21 January, German submarine U-22 encountered British destroyer HMS Exmouth (H 02), which was on escort duty off the coast of Moray Firth, Caithness, Scotland. The U-22 fired a G7e torpedo at Exmouth's starboard side and sank it, claiming the lives of all 190 of the crew. The destroyer took just minutes to sink, while the merchant vessel it was escorting, Cyprian Prince, escaped.



Image: Alamy



Special offer for readers in **North America**



# 4 FREE issues

When you subscribe\*

“History of War takes you through the stories, strategies, heroes and machines of armed conflict through the ages”



Order hotline **+44 (0)344 848 2852**

Online at **[www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/warusa](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/warusa)**

**\*Terms and conditions** This is a US subscription offer. 4 free issues refers to the US newsstand price of \$12.99 per issue. 13 issues being \$168.87 compared with \$116 for a subscription. You will receive 13 issues in a year. You can write to us or call us to cancel your subscription within 14 days of purchase. Payment is non-refundable after the 14-day cancellation period unless exceptional circumstances apply. Your statutory rights are not affected. Prices are correct at point of print and subject to change. Full details of the Direct Debit guarantee are available upon request. UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed-line numbers (starting 01 or 02) included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). For full terms and conditions please visit: [bit.ly/magtandc](http://bit.ly/magtandc). Offer ends 31st January 2020.

**OFFER  
EXPIRES  
31st Jan  
2020**



NEXT MONTH

# 20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

Experts give their verdict on the deadliest vessels and most critical innovations in maritime history



ON SALE  
23 JANUARY

Image: Alamy

## HISTORY of WAR

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA

### Editorial

Editor-in-Chief **Tim Williamson**  
timothy.williamson@futurenet.com

Senior Designer **Curtis Fermor-Dunman**

Features Editor **Tom Garner**

Production Editor **Tim Empey**

Senior Art Editor **Duncan Crook**

### Contributors

Edoardo Albert, Hareth Al Bustani, Craig Mooore, Stuart Hadaway, Mike Haksew, Michael Jones, Larry Paterson, Mark Simner, David Smith, William Welsh

### Main cover image

Nicolas Trudgian

### Photography

Alamy, Battlefield Design, The Art Agency, Rocio Espin, Mary Evans, Getty, Alex Pang, Shutterstock

All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

### Advertising

Media packs are available on request

Commercial Director **Clare Dove**

clare.dove@futurenet.com

Regional Advertising Director **Mark Wright**

mark.wright@futurenet.com

Advertising Manager **Toni Cole**

toni.cole@futurenet.com

Media Sales Executive **Jagdeep Maan**

jagdeep.maan@futurenet.com

### International

History of War is available for licensing. Contact the International department to discuss partnership opportunities  
International Licensing Director **Matt Ellis**

matt.ellis@futurenet.com

### Subscriptions

Email enquiries **contact@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk**

UK orderline & enquiries **0344 848 2852**

Overseas order line and enquiries **+44 (0) 344 848 2852**

Online orders & enquiries **www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk**

Head of subscriptions **Sharon Todd**

### Circulation

Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

### Production

Head of Production **Mark Constance**

Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**

Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**

Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**

Production Manager **Nola Cokely**

### Management

Chief Content Officer **Aaron Asadi**

Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**

Brand Director **Evan Kypreos**

Head of Art & Design **Greg Whittaker**

Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9060

ISSN 2054-376X

All contents © 2019 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The manufacturing paper mill and printer hold full FSC and PEFC certification and accreditation.



Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)

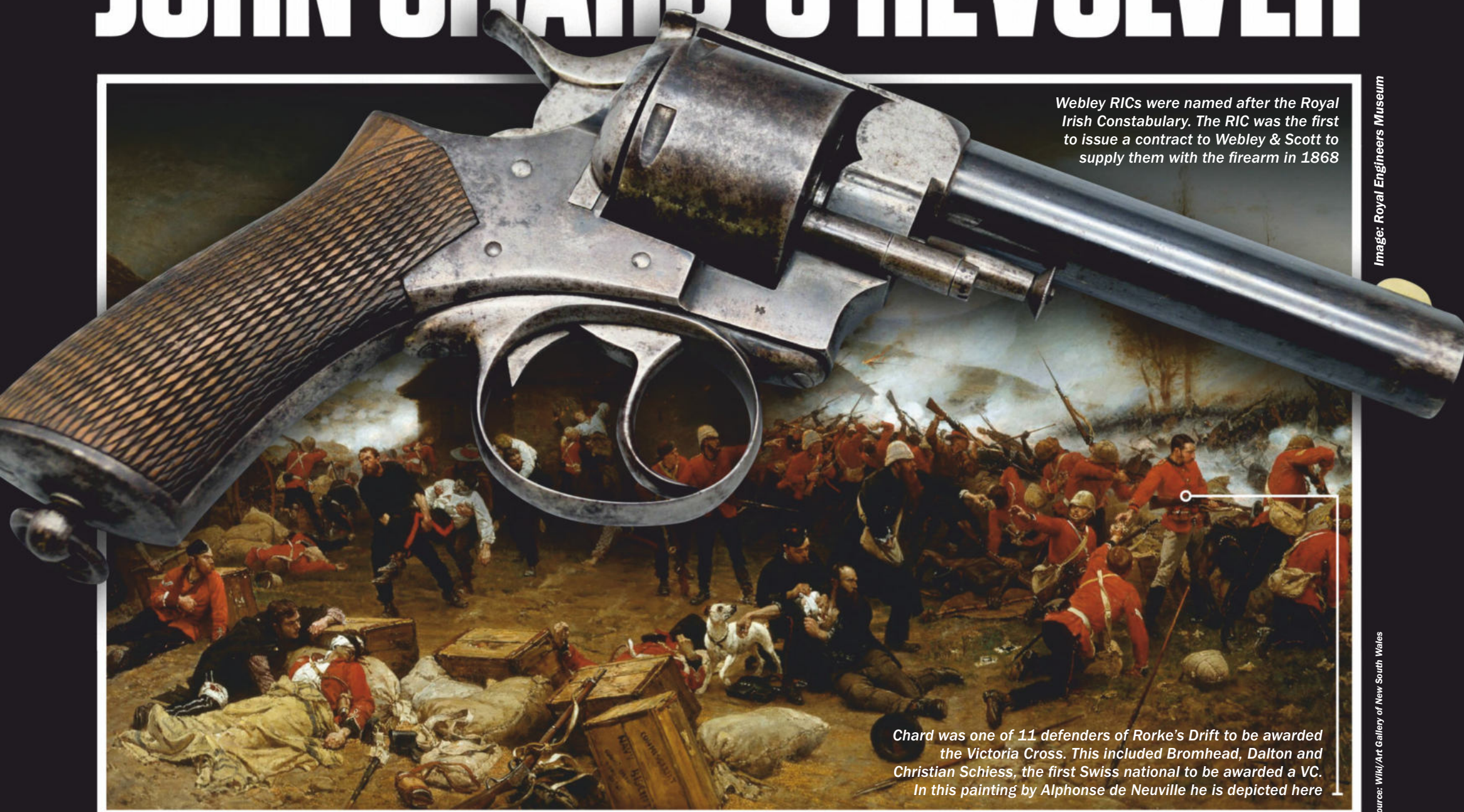
www.futureplc.com

Chief Executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**  
Non-executive Chairman **Richard Huntingford**  
Chief Financial Officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244



# JOHN CHARD'S REVOLVER



Webley RICs were named after the Royal Irish Constabulary. The RIC was the first to issue a contract to Webley & Scott to supply them with the firearm in 1868

Image: Royal Engineers Museum

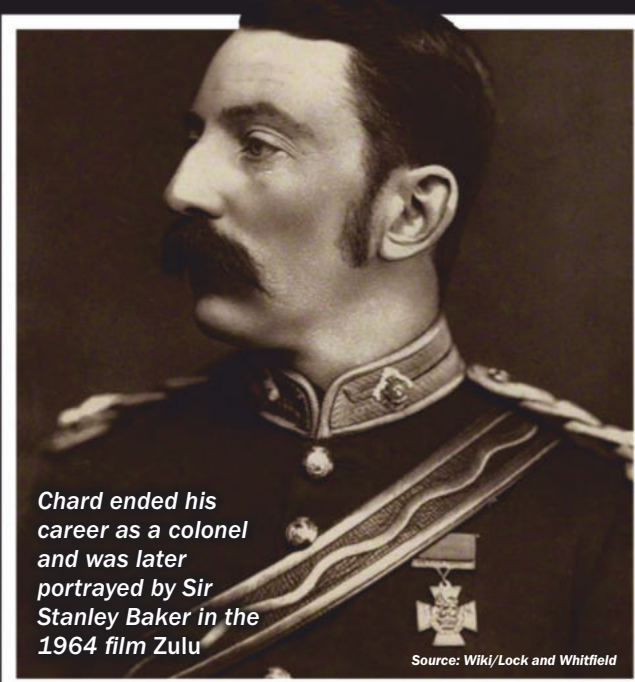
Chard was one of 11 defenders of Rorke's Drift to be awarded the Victoria Cross. This included Bromhead, Dalton and Christian Schiess, the first Swiss national to be awarded a VC. In this painting by Alphonse de Neuville he is depicted here

Source: Wiki/Art Gallery of New South Wales

The famous Victoria Cross recipient carried this weapon while commanding the British defence of Rorke's Drift in 1879

**J**ohn Chard is arguably the most famous officer to have served in the Royal Engineers. Commissioned in 1868, he served across the British Empire before participating in the Anglo-Zulu War. Chard was stationed at Rorke's Drift, an isolated depot and hospital in Natal and was tasked with protecting flying bridges across a nearby river. After the disastrous British defeat at Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift suddenly became the front line against an advancing, numerically superior force of Zulu warriors.

Although Chard was one of just two Royal Engineers (including his batman) and only ranked as a lieutenant, he was the senior officer at Rorke's Drift. Commanding a tiny garrison of approximately 140 soldiers, mostly from the 24th (2nd Warwickshire) Regiment of Foot, he worked closely with Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead and Assistant Commissary James Dalton to organise an improvised defence. This included loopholed buildings and barricades constructed from mealie bags, crates, wagons and even biscuit tins. During 22-23 January 1879, the



Chard ended his career as a colonel and was later portrayed by Sir Stanley Baker in the 1964 film Zulu

Source: Wiki/Lock and Whitfield

British fought a desperate battle against 3,000-4,000 determined Zulus. The hospital was set alight and the troops were forced to retreat behind their inner defences but they repulsed each attack.

Throughout this time, Chard patrolled the ground and continued strengthening the defences. He carried with him this Webley RIC .45 revolver. Manufactured by Webley & Scott, Chard's revolver was commonly used by British officers. The gun's model number is 1450 C. F. and the top of the barrel is marked 'Army & Navy C. S. L.'.

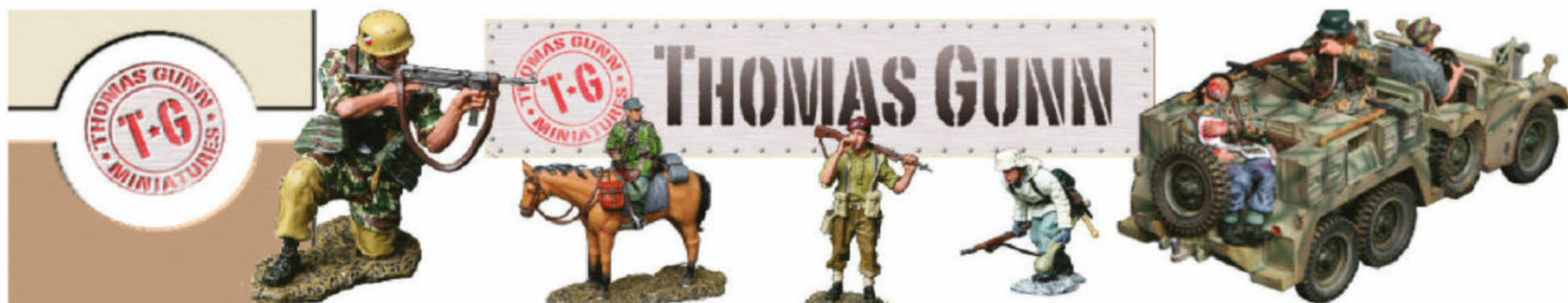
The garrison was finally relieved by a British column and Chard received the Victoria Cross for his "fine example and excellent behaviour". Rorke's Drift swiftly became one of the most celebrated defences in military history.



John Chard's revolver is held in the collections of the Royal Engineers Museum in Gillingham. The largest military museum in Kent, the REM tells the story of Britain's regiment of sappers and British military engineering.

For more information on opening times and prices visit: [www.re-museum.co.uk](http://www.re-museum.co.uk)





**AUSTRALIAN VC MEDAL PARADE**



**GENERAL GEORGE PATTON**



**ITALIAN FOLGORE**



**NEW PANZER IV**

**[WWW.TOMGUNN.CO.UK](http://WWW.TOMGUNN.CO.UK)**

**[EMAIL:WELCOME@GUNNCLUB.CO.UK](mailto:WELCOME@GUNNCLUB.CO.UK)**

**AVAILABLE DIRECT FROM US AND FROM ALL GOOD QUALITY SOLDIER STOCKISTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.**

**THOMAS GUNN MINIATURES**

**UNIT 21, DEVERILL ROAD TRADING ESTATE, SUTTON VENY, WARMINSTER, WILTSHIRE, BA12 7BZ**

**TEL: 01985 840539**